



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Health Opportunities High School**

**High School 670**

**350 Gerard Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10451**

**Principal: Carron Staple**

**Dates of Review: February 5 - 7, 2007**

**Reviewer: Ted Solow**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Health Opportunities High School, a theme-based high school, is located in a free-standing building it shares with another high school in the South Bronx. Students apply to the school through the high school admission process. 50% are selected by the school and the remaining 50% are selected at random. There are currently 582 students enrolled in grades 9 through 12. Hispanic students comprise 55% of the current enrollment, with 39.6% Black, 1.3% Asian and 1.2% White. The female to male ratio is 73.2% to 26.8%. Students who receive special education services comprise 5% of the student body and English language learners are 4% of the total. The school receives Title 1 funding.

Through careful management, the principal has minimized the impact of sharing certain facilities on the development of the school.

Average attendance for the latest reporting period was 86.55% which is higher than similar and other high schools in the City.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal provides strong leadership and is highly respected by staff, students and parents.
- The administrative team uses data effectively to monitor student, class, grade, and cohort performance.
- The administrative team is highly accessible.
- The school is highly regarded by members of the school community as a place that embraces a culture of high expectations in a safe, secure environment.
- There is a culture of mutual respect between administrators, teachers and students.
- Professional development activities are designed to have a direct impact on the progress of students.
- Academic intervention programs effectively support student learning.
- Procedures, policies and school rules are well known and followed.
- Classroom activities actively engage students.

### What the school needs to improve

- Increase opportunities for senior teachers to participate in an alternate to a formal observation program.
- Focus efforts on item analysis of Regents examination questions to identify students' weaknesses.
- Develop a walkthrough protocol whereby new and inexperienced teachers can observe good teaching practices.
- Establish differentiated classroom and homework activities.
- Develop strategies for engaging parents to become active partners in their student's learning.
- Improve attendance at extended day activities.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

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

The principal has just completed her third year at the school and is greatly appreciated by staff and parents. In the 13 year history of the school, eight other principals preceded her. There is finally a sense of stability that has helped the school move ahead with its proactive, positive agenda. The three assistant principals were selected and appointed during the past two years. Each assistant principal has particular subject expertise and the organizational skills to support the school's vision of high expectations for all students. The administrative team supports a collaborative approach in working with the staff for the benefit of the students. Parents and students speak highly of the school and its nurturing, safe and secure environment.

Data is used effectively to monitor student, class, grades and cohort progress. Staff are familiar with the tracking data created by the school and how it can be used in the classroom. Special attention to student attendance and lateness has resulted in a much improved attendance rate from month to month during the past two years. The school is now focusing on reducing lateness to school and to class.

### 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 uses a variety of data to track student progress. The administrative team collects and generates its own data to monitor the progress and performance of students, classes, grades and cohorts. Cohort data is examined for trends indicating credit accumulation, individual student progress, teacher success rate and departmental pass-fail percentage rates. The staff assesses students' progress in a variety of ways. Informal assessment data is gathered through teacher-made tests, homework, portfolios, class participation, notebooks and Regents practice examinations. Formal assessments occur through State Regents examinations, Regents Competency Tests, Advanced Placement Tests and departmental uniform examinations.

Data is used to monitor performance and progress of students by each subgroup in the school. Students identified as being at-risk or struggling in a content area course are offered extra assistance in the extended day program, peer tutoring sessions, lunchtime help in the house offices and at afternoon sessions where student can earn additional credits.

Cohort data regarding attendance, lateness and student progress are discussed at weekly meetings where an exchange of information targets specific students for intervention. The house coordinators represent their respective houses at these meetings with the

administrative team. The information is then shared with the house team at their regularly scheduled meetings.

The administration is beginning to track the relationship between lateness and class and school success. By illustrating this link, the school anticipates it will be able to strengthen attendance and punctuality and improve student performance outcomes.

**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.**

The comprehensive education plan and the principal’s goals and objectives target an increase in the graduation rate as one major focus. In order to attain these goals several strategies have been developed to help students pass regents examinations. Teachers and students jointly set individual attainment goals. House teams identify students’ strengths and weaknesses and modify curricula to address these needs. Scholarship reports are regularly analyzed to ensure that academic rigor is being maintained. Strategies to improve the passing rate are addressed at house, grade and departmental meetings. Students are encouraged to take advanced placement classes and to take specific electives of personal interest. As a result of these strategies a greater number of students are accumulating credits, graduating, and applying to and attending college.

Analysis of subject area data revealed that progress in United States history was not being attained by Black, special education and English language learners. These groups did not meet State standards equal to other subgroups. The principal and her cabinet recognize the need to target this area through increased professional development for staff and the examination of classroom strategies targeting this population.

Struggling students are given opportunities to receive assistance. The extended school day offers classes in every subject, but attendance at extended school day classes is poor. The school recognizes the need to provide incentives to increase attendance. Additional tutoring opportunities are offered during after school and Saturday school sessions. Other strategies employed by the school include regents preparation classes, administrative period tutoring by subject teachers, and peer tutoring. Students who have fallen behind are given the opportunity to earn additional credits through independent study coursework.

The school recognizes that parents must be their partners in educating their child. Parents are regularly invited to participate in parent teacher association meetings, open school afternoon and evening conferences and at school events. The parent coordinator has established English as a second language classes on Saturday for parents.

**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 curriculum used at the school follows City and State standards. In grade nine, English language arts courses are taught in a 90 minute block to provide a strong foundation for

future learning. Students scoring at level 1 or 2 on the eighth grade English language arts examination are programmed for Ramp-Up, a reading/writing program for students who are two or more years below grade level. Students who scored at level 1 or 2 on the eighth grade mathematics test are programmed for a 90 minute block of mathematics instruction. Supplemental and remedial services are provided for English language learners and special education students. Analysis of individual student data enables the school to personalize student programs. As a result of these strategies greater numbers of students are taking regents courses and examination and advanced placement courses.

Budget decisions support the instructional program. Specific budget decisions have resulted in reduced class size in the ninth grade. Restructured houses, with a dedicated team of teachers and related service providers, support the goals of the school. Sound budget decisions are securely based on identified needs; for example to maintain the low counselor to student ratio and to employ a retired assistant principal who is training the new assistant principal.

Teachers take responsibility for the achievement of their students. They prepare interesting lessons that engage the students and as a result levels of concentration are generally good. Classroom instructional strategies used by the staff include the workshop model where students are actively working, problem solving, sharing, asking and answering questions and traditional lecture-type activities. The principal has initiated a plan for professional development activities to address how to develop differentiated instructional strategies.

The house structure ensures that students are well known to staff members. Students find that "The teachers are very respectful to us". The low counselor to student ratio ensures that every student is seen four times or more each year.

Student attendance is a high priority. The attendance team meets monthly and a student's absence triggers an immediate response. Parents indicated they are contacted regularly about student lateness and absences. Currently the attendance rate is 84% and the school's implementation of a range of effective strategies has led to a steady monthly improvement from year to year

**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.**

Prospective staff members are interviewed about their subject knowledge, additional abilities, use of data, and educational vision. Successful candidates are asked to demonstrate proficiency in the classroom after developing an appropriate lesson plan. The principal makes the final decision with input from students, teachers and administrators. These procedures ensure that the most qualified of available candidates are hired.

There are extensive professional development activities at the school level, which take place at monthly faculty conferences and departmental meetings. Selected teachers, who have been identified as good practitioners, demonstrate strategies and share good practices.

The principal and the administrative team's high visibility foster the orderly operation and smooth running of the school. Every class is visited two to three times a week. The formal

observation process results in an oral and written report. Informal visits receive immediate verbal feedback. Interclass visitations are encouraged but there is no formal schedule for this activity. The principal plans to develop a walkthrough checklist for use when visiting classrooms.

The principal is highly respected. Parents, students and teachers stated that she has brought stability to the school. Under her leadership, rules, regulations, and policies, as outlined in the staff manual and student handbook are known to all and generally followed.

More than 60 partnerships with local healthcare agencies, colleges, universities and community-based organizations support the educational, social and behavioral goals of the school. The school and their partners are able to meet the needs of the larger school community and provide expanded educational experiences for the 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 proficient.**

The comprehensive education plan and the principal's goals and objectives outline the broad goals for the school for the academic year. The administrative team has implemented a regular review process that examines progress towards meeting school goals, enables revisions and mid-course corrections, and the incorporation of intermediate steps. The effectiveness of curriculum, use of budget and students' engagement and outcomes are the lens for the review. The documents are created by the school leadership team, which includes administrators, teachers, students and parents, and are then discussed at the regularly scheduled team meetings.

Students, classes, grades and cohort data inform decisions about the instructional program. House teams are encouraged to share information about individual student strengths, weaknesses, and academic and emotional needs. The administration and guidance staff closely monitors credit accumulation as students move through the grades towards graduation. When the need arises immediate interventions can be created and put into place.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Health Opportunities High School (HS 670)</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	