



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Agnes Y. Humphrey School for Leadership

Elementary - High School 027

**27 Huntington Street
Brooklyn
NY 11231**

Principal: Sara Barnes

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Lead Reviewer: Jo Cheadle

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Agnes Y. Humphrey is an elementary-high school with 585 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 10. The school population comprises 54.2% Black, 45.8% Hispanic, 2.2% White, and 1% students from other ethnic groups. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 34% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 89.3%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 92% eligibility.

The school is in its fifth year of developing a fully inclusive model of education for grades pre-kindergarten to 12. All classes are designed on an inclusive collaborative team teaching model. The school occupies a very old building that requires substantial improvement and continual maintenance. Leaders work continually to upgrade and improve facilities, but there are areas of the school that remain in juxtaposition to their vision of what a positive school environment should be like. In addition, the school shares already limited space with a District 75 school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides strong leadership and ensures that the vision for what the school should be like is very well established.
- The school has a very good knowledge of individual students and their needs and this effectively guides the best teaching.
- Available data is used to good effect to inform and monitor student, teacher and whole school outcomes.
- Staff work together well to set goals for student learning and plan strategies to ensure that students achieve these goals.
- Expectations of staff and students are high, encouraging teachers to feel a great sense of accountability for student progress.
- There is a very good balance of support for students' academic and personal development.
- There are well-organized systems of delegated leadership and management that are appropriate for the school and enable an orderly and purposeful climate.
- There are good opportunities for professional development that ensure that individual teachers and the school as a whole make continual improvement.
- There are good links with a range of partners that effectively support student learning, personal development and whole school improvement.

What the school needs to improve

- Encourage development and improvement of the curriculum by extending the use of detailed data analysis to monitor specific subjects.
- Extend the use of the computerized tracking system in monitoring student and teacher outcomes, subgroup performance and subject trends in order make informed decisions about future action.
- Ensure that there is consistency in the match of instruction and teaching styles to meet student needs, particularly in grades 7 through 9.
- Further improve the school building to realize the vision for a pleasant and conducive learning environment.

Part 3: Main findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The strong and intelligent leadership of the principal drives the realization of “the community promise”. Leaders and faculty at this school “do not give up on any child”. The school understands clearly the complex needs of the students, their families and the local community. As a result, everyone in the school community has a clear vision for the future development of the school. Despite challenges, leaders acknowledge their responsibility to address successfully these needs by providing learning opportunities that bridge gaps in prior learning experiences and enable students to be successful. Leaders communicate the vision very effectively to staff, students and parents. There is no misunderstanding about the purpose of the school’s work and teachers fully recognize their accountability to provide well for students. Parents appreciate that leaders are working hard to create “a high quality school close to home”. Students believe that they have good teachers and a “strict, but fair” principal who want them to be successful. The development process has not been easy and there are still hurdles to overcome, for example, monitoring specific subjects. However, the school is on the right track to becoming the “school of our dreams”.

The school has made good improvements since the last Quality Review. Leaders are working in close cooperation with the Department of Education to iron out difficulties in capturing accurate data for the student population. Over past years, leaders have collected a comprehensive set of self-generated information on student performance. This information is now part of a computerized tracking system. The system enables leaders and faculty to make quick and useful analysis of data. School leaders recognize the need to use the system to carry out the detailed monitoring of student and teacher outcomes, subgroup performance and subject trends that will allow them to make informed decisions about future action. While many teachers are confident in the use of data to plan differentiated instruction to meet student needs, this remains an area for improvement. In grades 7 through 9 in particular, the match of learning experiences and teaching methods does not always meet students learning styles or interests. The school has a well-organized and attractive library, which is an example of how leaders would like the whole school to look. However, despite concerted efforts, there are areas of the building that are in poor repair and not conducive to the school’s desire to create the best possible learning climate for students.

The school’s inquiry team work is progressing well. Rather than working as one team, the school has created “inquiry teamlets” across all grades. These groups are working to identify patterns and trends in student performance and plan intervention to improve progress. One teamlet, for example, is focusing on a group of students who have good decoding skills but difficulty comprehending information in the text.

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 the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

There are ongoing inaccuracies in the formal data that the school receives pertaining to student performance in grade level tests. This has made tracking and comparisons less useful and inconclusive. However, leaders have collected and used a substantial set of accurate school-generated data in past years. From this data, they have established a clear picture of student performance and teacher outcomes. They use the information to drive decision-making and development planning. Leaders collate data from a suitable range of assessment materials, including Rigby Analysis, end of unit and predictive tests and teacher conferencing notes. This information is now incorporated into a computerized tracking system, created in partnership with New Visions. Leaders have immediately seen the benefit of easily accessible and manageable computerized data. Even in the early stages of implementation, the program allows more advanced disaggregation of data to provide a detailed picture of individual performance. Leaders are working to ensure that the program will facilitate closer analysis of individual student progress, trends in subject performance and outcomes for specific subgroups that will hone decision-making and goal setting.

The school's data collection has always included analysis of outcomes for girls and boys, special education students and English language learners. The analysis has led to improved early identification of needs and the development of individualized programs. Improved screening of students on entry to school, including an early childhood math assessment, provides the baseline for building a clear picture of progress over time. The school is successfully building its capacity to measure success over time. As grade groups extend into the high school, the school looks forward to its first graduation year in 2010. At this point, a complete set of data will be available to provide clearer benchmarks for long-term goals and development planning. In the short-term, the school aims to improve consistency in the use of data and develop teachers' confidence and skills in analysis.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school's climate encourages high levels of collaboration. The development of leadership skills is central to the school's vision, and staff work in a variety of roles to gain experience and knowledge. There are good opportunities for all staff to engage in valuable professional dialogue that involves them fully in whole school development discussions. In this way, faculty members understand and share student and whole school goals. The inquiry teamlets and grade group meetings exemplify this collaboration well. There is clear evidence that teachers carry out regular interim assessments and use this information to revise intervention strategies and ensure that progress towards goals is continuous. Goals are amended in the light of new assessment information. The school's "circle of support" is dependent on good communication and collaboration. This support structure begins with the concerns of the classroom teacher and moves through a well structured chain of discussion, decision making and problem-solving groups to reach an agreed outcome that will positively influence student learning. The circle ensures that there is no member of staff "out of the loop" and unsure of the goals that are set for

students. It facilitates suitable communication of goals to parents, who feel that teachers keep them informed of how well their children are doing and what they need to do to improve. Staff would like to see partnerships with parents improve further still.

There are high expectations for students and staff. These manifest themselves in a commitment to improve and maintain aspirational goals for the future. The school is becoming increasingly successful at meeting students' individual needs while setting realistic yet challenging goals. Teachers understand the need to make closer analysis of accurate and well-presented data to inform decision-making fully. Leaders acknowledge that the school is on a learning path in this area and has good plans for improvement.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has afforded extensive time and effort to developing a curriculum structure that best suits the needs of its students. The curriculum for the youngest children is a unique structure of cross-grade learning and teaching. The structure enables close match of instruction to young learners' academic, social and personal needs. Teachers work to provide relevant experiences that bridge early learning gaps and build firm foundations for future learning. As a member of the national network of Expeditionary Learning schools, the school creates year-long interdisciplinary thematic units for its older students. These units pay full regard to prescribed curriculum and State and City standards, but acknowledge that there cannot be a "one model fits all" approach. In planning, teachers take full account of students' starting points, their interests and life experiences and community-relevant information. In this way, they endeavor to create curriculum experiences that are relevant, meaningful and motivating for all students. This work is demanding and leaders recognize that there is still room for improvement to ensure that all units are perfected, that developments influence learning in all grades and data is used to monitor specific subjects.

Not all teachers are consistent in their use of student information to adapt and amend the instruction to meet individual needs. Staff turnover in the middle school grades has somewhat delayed curriculum improvement in particular. Examples of good practice in the use of data to drive instruction is evident in curriculum leadership teams, where teacher developed data supports planning for subjects and student groups successfully. However, fine-tuning of differentiation is an area of development for the school and, as such, part of the school's improvement plans. Older students say that they would appreciate more "hands on, practical learning" and would like to see improvements to the science curriculum in particular.

School leaders attract and use finances wisely to fulfill the school's inclusive vision, ensure that teacher to student ratios are good and create plans for the extension of the high school grades. Learning materials and school environment are constantly improved, but leaders recognize that continued resources are needed to ensure consistently good programming. They are also highly aware that the climate for learning depends greatly on how students view their environment. They strive hard to create a well-resourced school that supports students' learning well and motivates their good attendance.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

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

The principal knows the strengths of her staff very well. She is equally aware and realistic about the areas of their practice that need improvement. She carries out regular walk-throughs to inform her judgments. She has also trained assistant principals and coaches to evaluate learning and teaching effectively. Many teachers are relatively young and inexperienced. The school is effective in supporting them towards becoming exemplary teachers. The school is successful in its provision of professional development opportunities and provides a range of relevant experiences to ensure that staff continually improve. From the new initiative to create peer leadership classrooms where teachers model best practice, to professional development via grade meetings, the school provides a range of opportunities that match individual needs while successfully addressing whole school goals for improvement.

A significant positive influence on teacher instruction is the good partnerships forged with a growing number of outside entities. These include an independent consultancy group who are carrying out extensive work to develop the English language arts curriculum. They have supported the school in creating detailed rubrics for moderating persuasive and personal writing. These tools are a great support to teachers in developing in-depth knowledge of expected standards, particularly for the school's newest teachers. Partnership with New Vision has also "exceeded expectations" in terms of support and advice. The school is very positive about the potential of this partnership in securing school improvement. Good partnerships are also vital to the school's aim of supporting students' academic and personal development in equal balance. The Good Shepherd Services, sited in the school building, make an invaluable contribution to students' social and personal development and provide support and security when challenges are particularly difficult for students.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

In constantly shifting sands, leaders have consistently advocated a very clear message regarding the school vision. They have appropriately amended plans in response to internal and external demands to realize the caring, collaborating and life-long learning establishment that is central to this vision. There is no fear in changing the route of the journey if success is not visible and as teachers become more adept at using assessment information, their contribution to measuring success and redefining interim goals is growing. The school is very self-reflective and monitors its work regularly. However, school leaders recognize the need to use the new computerized data system to carry out the detailed monitoring of student and teacher outcomes, subgroup performance and subject trends that will allow them to make informed decisions about future action.

Part of the monitoring process includes an annual mid-school retreat for three days where faculty, partners and parent leaders review school progress and devise or amend plans for future developments. The principal communicates goals to the whole staff through an annual "state of the school address". It is exceptionally clear that this unique school knows where it is going, understands the complexity of its intentions, wants to do exactly what is needed to provide appropriately for its students and has the capacity to be successful.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Agnes Y. Humphrey School for Leadership	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score			X		

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.					
To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?			X		
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?			X		
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?			X		
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?			X		
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X		

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.					
To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?				X	
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?			X		
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X		

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?			X		
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?			X		
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				X	

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?			X		
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?			X		
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to make strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?			X		
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X		