



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Gil Hodges School

Elementary School 193

**2515 Avenue L
Brooklyn
NY 11210**

Principal: Frank Cimino

Dates of review: December 10 - 11, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Martin Newell

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Gil Hodges School is an elementary school with 847 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 53% Black, 14% Hispanic, 17% White, and 15% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006/2007 was 93.7%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 62% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- At the core of the principal's leadership lies his passion for the care and well-being of all students.
- The school collects a good deal of data to monitor and evaluate the performance of students.
- The administration and staff work together very well to create a harmonious learning environment.
- Instruction is at its best when lessons are challenging but fun and work is well matched to the individual needs of students.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a wide array of creative arts and enrichment activities.
- The formal and informal observations of lessons by the principal and assistant principal are valued by staff and pointers for improvement are taken on board.
- There is good support for teachers new to the profession and to the school which enables them to function effectively.
- Students behave well and their enjoyment of school is reflected in the attendance rates.
- The individuality of students is recognized and celebrated and contributes much to the positive school culture.
- The strong partnership with parents enables them to play an active role in their child's learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Collate and organize data in the best way to provide the clearest overview of student progress.
- Build and embed the good start made in teacher conferencing as a vehicle for setting and reviewing long and short-term targets and goals.
- Provide more opportunities to check on student progress by evaluating their portfolios of work.
- Extend the good practice of marking and leveling of students' work so that it consistently gives pointers for improvement.
- Empower students to play a more proactive role in their own learning by making them aware of personalized targets and through setting their own goals.

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 principal is held in high regard by students, staff and parents and at the core of his leadership lies his concern for each student. His commitment to the school is tangible and he benefits from the good support of the assistant principal and other key leaders. They work together in a cohesive manner in creating a harmonious learning community where the individuality of students is recognized and celebrated. Under the leadership of the principal the school has tackled the issues from the last Quality Review in a rigorous manner and the school is a better place for it. The short time scale since the last review however means the strategies put in place have not yet realized their full potential. The school collects an extensive amount of data from a range of different tests and assessments and this gives the school and its leaders a good picture as to how different students are performing. However, the data is not organized in the best possible way to give the clearest overview of where student progress is strongest or weaker. The school has recently introduced teacher conferencing as a strategy for setting long and short term student goals that teachers are then responsible for students achieving. Shoots of success from this initiative are clearly growing but the process is at an early stage of development.

There are strengths in instruction when lessons are packed full of pace and challenge, students are kept on their toes and data is used to closely match tasks and activities to the individual abilities and aspirations of students. Students play their part by behaving well, attending school regularly and through the high levels of respect they show to staff and to one another - factors that all help to make the school a safe, caring and inclusive place to learn. Students' enjoyment of school is certainly enhanced by the rich and vibrant attention the school pays to creative arts provision and to the wide array of enrichment activities. Other strengths include the way in which teachers are reflective and ready to take on board pointers for improving their instruction after both formal and informal lesson observations and how they are ready to learn from one another and from professional development activities. The inquiry team has made a good start in its work and the principal is eager to spread the success of initiatives and practice to students beyond those identified in greatest need. While the school continues to improve there is still work to be done in checking on student progress more rigorously by evaluating their portfolios of work, in ensuring the marking of students' work gives clear guidance on improvement and in personalizing student targets and goals to more closely match their abilities. The principal and staff are determined to move the school on to the next level.

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.

The school collects a good deal of data in order to gain an insight into how well students are performing. In addition to the State and City tests the school carries out a number of periodic assessments. The school is now more focused on measuring student performance than it has been in the past and key to this is the school readiness to compare how well students are doing by gender, ethnicity, ability, subject, class and grade. Analyses have indicated that the school historically performs more strongly in math than in English language arts and groups such as Hispanic boys are a particular focus. Visits are in the process of being arranged with similar performing schools so that exemplars of good practice may be shared and disseminated.

Over the last year the principal has introduced teacher conferencing where teachers are being held more accountable for the performance of students they teach. This process is at an early stage of development but is starting to have a positive impact on student learning. Increasingly teachers are gaining a stronger perspective into how data can be used to drive instruction. The school has identified the need to provide further training for teachers to enable this good practice to be a consistent feature across all classes. The school does not currently measure student progress as well as it does student performance. At present the data that the school collects is not organized in the best possible way to give a clear overview of the progress that different students are making.

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.

School leaders meet regularly to set whole school goals and these goals are increasingly shared with teachers through grade meetings. Many of these goals come from the analysis of test and assessment data and are then fed into the Comprehensive Education Plan where they are clearly articulated with appropriate timeframes for success. The school has begun this year to set targets and goals for teachers in terms of levels of performance the students they teach are expected to reach. The school has made an effective start with the inquiry team strategy in identifying groups of students whose progress is a cause for concern. They are looking at how different learning styles may be best suited to different students and are seeking to extend this practice across the school.

The principal looks at how well students are doing in their writing through the sampling of students' work. The school recognizes that an area for development is for the more regular monitoring of students' portfolios of work by key staff and teachers in order to get a more detailed picture of student progress. There is some good practice of checking and leveling of students' work that gives clear pointers for improvement or states what is needed to reach the next level, but this practice is not yet consistent across the school. The role that students are expected to play in their own learning is improving with peer editing in some classes being an effective tool. However, student targets are not yet consistently tailored to their individual needs and achievement and students do not always

play a proactive role in setting their own goals. Parents are kept well informed of their child's performance and the school runs a number of good quality workshops that enhance their capacity to be partners in their child's learning journey. Parents are also quick to point out that the approachability and 'open-door' policy of the principal and staff is further strengthened by their readiness to take on board any comments and information parents may bring up about the learning needs and capacities of their children.

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 recently introduced a detailed curriculum map which lies at the core of the school's planning for different subjects. Teachers find this to be a useful document in ensuring parity of provision between classes in the same grade although they are still making amendments to ensure it has the best impact on learning. A particular strength of the curriculum is the emphasis given to the creative arts and enrichment activities. A plethora of opportunities are on offer for students to participate in singing, dancing, drama, performances and other musical activities. A wide array of clubs and trips to museums, theaters and other places of interest add much to students' enjoyment of school as well as broadening their cultural awareness. Teachers are increasingly using data to help drive their instruction and the recent introduction of teacher conferencing has seen a greater emphasis being put on the utilization of data as a tool for holding teachers accountable for the performance of students. This is proving effective although it is still work in progress. Where instruction is at its best it is because lessons are challenging but fun and teachers go the extra mile in matching work to the needs and abilities of students. This is more evident in some classes more than others.

There is a good working environment across the school because of the mutual bond of respect that exists between staff and students and because students are well behaved. The principal makes appropriate staffing decisions that are geared to areas of need identified through data analysis. An example of this is the appointment of specialist reading and writing teachers to help bolster student performance in English language arts. The school is generally well resourced although it is rightly looking to improve its technology resources. There are strong and effective procedures in place for promoting good attendance which are helped by the fact that students enjoy coming to school.

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 proficient.

The principal and the assistant principal carry out a good number of lesson observations. These are both formal and informal and teachers value the constructive feedback that is given to help improve the quality of their instruction and student learning. In addition the professional development team conducts learning walks that have a specific focus and together with the other observations, the information is used to inform professional development activities that meet the school and individual teacher needs. Good practice is evident of information from professional development activities being shared across grades so that its impact is more widespread and influential. Teachers work well together

and the school is seeking to further increase the number of opportunities for intervisitations and other methods of sharing good practice. Coaches are often available to carry out team teaching or to model lessons and this provides good opportunities to capitalize on the individual skills and expertise of key teachers in the school. There is scope for improving how students' progress in different classes is monitored because at present their portfolios of work are not evaluated on a regular or systematic enough basis to have the best possible impact on accelerating learning.

Good procedures are in place to support teachers new to the profession or to the school. On starting their appointment they are assigned mentors that include a reading teacher, a math coach and a veteran teacher on their grade. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and behavior is not an issue in terms of any adverse impact on the learning of students. Any students that exhibit behavioral problems are supported well and their progress is carefully monitored. This is further strengthened by the drawing up of behavioral contracts that outline the roles and responsibilities of students, teachers, parents and administrators in helping to improve behavior.

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.

The school collects a good deal of data through a range of tests and ongoing assessments. The information generated from these is used to formalize whole school goals. The school now increasingly sets goals at grade and class levels. The teacher conferencing that has been recently introduced means that there is now more discussion with teachers to discuss progress towards these goals and in turn a greater level of accountability through the setting of both short and long-term goals. As this process becomes more embedded the school intends to make more incisive amendments to instruction and provision that may be needed if these targets and goals are not met or indeed exceeded. Since the last Quality Review the school is placing a greater emphasis on the analysis and utilization of data as a vehicle for improving student performance. The impact of initiatives is not yet fully realized because of the length of time that they have been in place and because the good level of data is not yet organized in the most effective way to give a clear overview of progress and to see where adaptations may need to be made to accelerate students' learning. Although, there is still work to be done, teachers are becoming more confident and adept at using Acuity to identify strengths and weaknesses in performance and recognizing that adaptations in instruction may be necessary at either subject, grade or class level.

The work of the inquiry team has got off to a good start and together with the evaluation of intervention strategies has led to analysis of how good practice may be adapted to meet a range of different groups of students across the school. The principal is passionate about and totally committed to the school. He is well supported by the assistant principal and other leaders and the success, care and well being of all students is the key priority. The changes brought about since the last review are increasingly impacting on the work of the school but the short time between reviews means that the full extent of the impact is yet to be realized.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Gil Hodges School	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		