



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Eugenio Maria De Hostos

**Middle School 318
101 Walton Street
Brooklyn
NY 11206**

Principal: Fortunato Rubino

Dates of review: March 31 - April 2, 2008

Reviewer: John Francis

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Eugenio Maria de Hostos is an intermediate school with 1458 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 14% Black, 64% Hispanic, 16% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 6% 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 94.6%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 70% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- A very sophisticated data system enables the school to accurately monitor the achievement and progress of individuals, grades and subjects.
- There is a strong focus on promoting the progress of those students achieving just below grade level.
- The curriculum is broad and imaginative, with an exceptional range of enrichment activities that enhance students' learning.
- There is an exceptionally high level of trust and respect between the faculty and students leading to high quality personal and academic development.
- There are well developed and highly effective procedures and arrangements for inducting and supporting teachers new to the school.
- The arrangements for encouraging and monitoring students' attendance result in consistently high levels across the school.
- The clear and consistently applied procedures for ensuring the smooth running of the school create a purposeful learning environment.
- Regular assessments are used to modify strategic planning and budgeting so they are exceptionally well aligned to the needs of all students.
- The principal's clarity of vision, shared with and supported by the whole faculty is instrumental in bringing about improvement.
- Strong relationships with parents are enhanced by the high quality of communication about the achievement and progress of their children.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to strive for consistency in instruction that leads to all lessons delivering the high expectations and levels of challenge seen in the best.
- Ensure that classroom observations are more sharply focused on the quality of the outcomes for students.
- Apply the same rigor in analyzing information relating to gender and ethnicity as is seen in all other aspects of data analysis.

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 well developed.

The school continues to make good progress since the last Quality Review, while consolidating its already good practice. It prepares its students well for the future both emotionally and academically. This is recognized and appreciated by parents who feel they are equal partners in the system, receiving from, and sharing with the school, good quality information about their children's achievements in all aspects of their work. Very effective day-to-day management of the school and the high levels of cooperation and maturity of the students ensure its smooth running. There is an outstanding level of respect between students and educators. The extensive curriculum with its excellent range of additional activities enriches students' education considerably. Alongside these programs and the high level of student engagement, clear procedures ensure high levels of attendance. The emphasis placed on developing students' higher-level thinking skills can be seen, for example, in the school's outstandingly successful chess team.

Achievement has continued to rise over the years and classes for honors and gifted and talented students enable them to make accelerated progress. As a result, some leave this middle school achieving levels more often seen at sophomore level in high schools. The needs of those students who find learning more difficult are also addressed well. The creation of smaller classes, an appropriate curriculum and good, direct instruction, are the ingredients in the success the school has in progressing its lower third of students. All of this is rooted firmly in the excellent systems for gathering, analyzing and evaluating test and assessment data. Using this array of data, the students' responses can be evaluated by question or area of skill to give a very clear picture of their strengths and weaknesses. Class groupings are subject to constant re-evaluation and realignment as goals or students' needs change. Students close to grade level are targeted as a discrete group and their progress closely monitored by the inquiry team

Administrators and coaches frequently observe and review classroom practice and use this information to enhance teachers' instructional skills. However, the observations focus too heavily on instruction and not enough on its impact on students. Nevertheless, along with data analysis, the outcomes of this monitoring are used well to generate high-quality professional development. This, along with the extensive support systems in place, ensures that teachers new to the school or the profession are exceptionally well supported and given every opportunity to develop their management and pedagogical skills and grow as educators.

All key developments flow from the high level of knowledge, skill and ability of the principal, ably supported by the administration. His clear vision, shared by stakeholders in the school community is driving the school forward and continues to do so.

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 well developed.

The whole faculty is dedicated to addressing the needs of all student groups and through rigorous school-wide systems, all are acutely aware of these needs at many levels. Detailed and sophisticated systems enable the school to gather and analyze a wide range of data. Mandated City and State tests are supplemented with regular and reliable internal assessments. The sophistication of the system comes through the ability of the school's own computer program to sort the data by grade, class and cohort, by student response or item analysis of the questions. This detailed breakdown profiles individual student or group needs and enables teachers to match their instruction more closely to these needs or set up timely and well-targeted interventions. From the analysis of this initial data, further detailed diagnostic assessment is carried out on those students performing at the lower levels. This enables the school to quickly identify and then target specific skill deficiencies in English language arts and math. Additionally, the system produces constantly updated reports on students' achievement and progress over time. School leaders are very effective in analyzing this data to identify trends and variations against their own historical performance or other schools but do not evaluate in as much detail for gender or ethnicity. However, the whole system is extremely responsive, enabling progress and achievement to be regularly assessed and changes to trends quickly identified and acted on.

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 well developed.

The principal and administration set high expectations for themselves and for the whole community takes its lead from this. Whole-school goals are firmly rooted in the evaluation of the data, challenging students and teachers alike. An outstanding example of this is seen where those students close to grade level competency are targeted as a discrete group and their progress closely monitored by the inquiry team. The outcomes of regular, diagnostic assessments are used to set up specifically focused academic programs. An analysis of students' skills competencies enables the school to group students by accurately identified needs. This enables well-targeted interventions to be made through detailed planning, supported by the use of highly trained paraprofessionals.

All teachers of every subject and at each grade have a good understanding of the academic progress of the students in their care. From this flows carefully designed academic programs to meet the specific needs of each student. Because everyone is party to all of this information and to the expectations of the administration, there is a high level of accountability. Strong relationships with parents are enhanced by the high

quality of communication with them about the achievement and progress of their children. This process sets out clear expectations on both sides that cement this relationship from the earliest stage. Parents, caregivers and teachers all have similarly high expectations of each other and the students.

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 well developed.

Whole-school curriculum approaches are carefully thought out and good links made between subjects where appropriate. These are supplemented by an exceptional range of enrichment activities that further enhance students’ learning. This is part of very effective budgeting strategies, scheduling and use of other services directed at meeting the academic and social needs of all students. A further example of this is in the deliberate creation of small classes for those students who struggle with aspects of their English and math. As a result, students are making rapid gains in their achievement. The outstanding successes of the school’s chess team clearly show a focus on developing students’ thinking skills to the highest level. For those students who are the lowest achievers, they also have the opportunity to study the life skills they will need for the future.

The conditions for learning are excellent. There is an outstanding level of trust and respect between staff and students leading to high-quality personal and academic development. Parents, students and faculty members place a high value on this and administrators and teachers are great role models for the students. This is well supported by the high-quality work of the deans, who regularly go the extra mile for the students. Instruction is mostly very effective, generating a high level of engagement and enjoyment from the students. However, this is not consistent across the school and there are occasions where the instruction fails to inspire. A high-quality curriculum, excellent relationships and good arrangements for encouraging and monitoring student absence result in consistently high levels of attendance across the 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 well developed.

Regular formal and informal classroom observations by administrators and coaches support the development of teachers’ instructional skills. Teachers feel comfortable with the process and find it professionally supportive. However, records of classroom monitoring indicate too much focus on teachers’ skills and activities and not enough on what and how well the students are learning. The links between cause and effect are not yet strongly enough made. However, the outcomes of monitoring, along with the evaluation of the detailed data sets, are used very effectively to develop high-quality professional development opportunities, much of which are led by the administration and coaches. These activities are well supported by the many opportunities teachers have for inter-visitations, both in and out of school, to expand their instructional skills.

Alongside this there are exemplary systems for inducting, supporting and developing teachers new to the profession or to the school. Well-targeted mentoring and regular conferencing are key elements of this.

The school runs exceptionally smoothly and day-to-day management is unobtrusive but highly effective. For example, the levels of responsibility shown by students, reduces the need for a highly visible presence of teachers at transitioning. The school has well-established and productive links with a wide range of organizations for the benefit of the students. For example, links with local hospitals enable students to shadow medical professionals and gain an insight into the possibilities that are open to them.

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 well developed.

The principal has a clear vision for the school, shared with and supported by the whole faculty. This commitment has been instrumental in bringing about further significant improvements. High-quality long-term planning and goal setting, with clear time frames, regularly reviewed, provides the driver for the school's success. The administration and teachers continually review the performance of students and are quick to respond to changes that occur. The detailed analysis of the skill strands in English language arts and math have resulted in modifications to the curriculum and instructional approaches where weaknesses were identified. The school has very good systems for carrying out its own periodic assessments and acting quickly on the information from these to target areas of greatest need. For example, the strategic decision by the administration that the additional costs associated with the creation of smaller classes for struggling students is justified by their rate of progress and their achievement. The school's own computerized data analysis program enables clear evaluation of all aspects of the data leading to clear diagnosis of need and sharp target setting. The confidence of the administration is seen in their ability to stand back from some day-to-day operational and organizational decisions and let those directly concerned make them. For example, the organization of students in the split classes is managed by the teachers. This is a school where all members of faculty grow. However, teachers clearly understand the level of accountability this degree of autonomy brings and willingly accept the challenge. The continuing development of the school shows it is well placed to continue this into the future.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Eugenio Maria Dehostos	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 rigorous, 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 and tardiness?					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, and effectively address discipline related incidents?					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 makes 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

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped