



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Hugo Newman College Preparatory School

Elementary-Middle School 180

**370 West 120th Street
New York
NY 10027**

Principal: Dr Peter L McFarlane

Dates of review: April 7 - 8, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Paul Cosway

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Hugo Newman College Preparatory School is an elementary-middle school with 570 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 7. The school population comprises 75% Black, 22% Hispanic, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 10% 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 91.9%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 74% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- A very wide range of data is used to track students' progress and students are involved very well in their own assessment and target setting.
- The school has high aspirations for the academic success and personal development of all of its students and achievement rises consistently every year as a result.
- Parents are very well aware of their children's progress and have many opportunities to exchange information with school staff.
- The excellent environment and curriculum motivate students to get to college and ensure they realize the importance of regular attendance.
- Staff know and care for their students well, constantly seeking ways to help them to improve their work, and guidance systems are very effective.
- Teachers work well in teams to share and improve their instructional practice, and new teachers are very well supported.
- Relationships between teachers and students across the school are very positive, so students are very well-behaved and responsible.
- School leaders are very skilled at making strategic decisions, based securely on data, to help the school to meet its academic goals.
- The principal, who is a passionate and exemplary leader, sets the tone for the school and his high expectations drive a clear vision for its future.
- Clear, consistent systems ensure the school is orderly and runs smoothly and there are excellent partnerships with outside agencies.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend teacher's skills in differentiating instruction.
- Further refine the setting of specific interim and annual goals for teachers and students and review these regularly by sub groups, using the outcomes to revise instruction to make it more effective.
- Refine data analysis of the performance and progress of sub groups of students.

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 prides itself in being a partnership of learners, united in the belief that excellence in education is the only choice worth making. Students, parents and teachers sign contracts committing themselves to fulfilling the school's ideals. College entry is the ultimate goal for every student, regardless of his or her ability at the start of their schooling. These high expectations are everywhere apparent, the school runs smoothly and discipline is excellent. Attendance is above the City average and is rising, both because students want to come to school and because of very good home and school partnerships. Their high aspirations lead to students being motivated to do well, paying attention in class and being very respectful to their teachers. Those with experience in other schools are grateful for the opportunities that Hugo Newman gives them. The curriculum is varied and designed to meet students' learning needs. The focus on music, dance and sports builds their confidence and the opportunities to take advanced courses, such as math Regents in middle school, ensure that they have opportunities to extend their learning. There is a very wide range of after school activities, along with "cluster" courses that develop students' interests and skills. There are excellent links with outside organizations that significantly enhance the students' learning experience.

The school gathers a very wide range of data to enable it to monitor progress at individual, grade and whole school levels. It is less effective at analyzing the progress of subgroups. The whole school community is fully aware of the school goals, which are aspirational and not specific to each student's prior achievement. However, there are many interim checks on each student's progress, with very effective interventions when students fail to reach the expected level. The principal cares deeply for each individual student and teachers follow his lead, ensuring that no child is retained if there is anyway that it can be avoided. The inquiry team is working well. Students have been identified for the focus group and a wide range of information and data is used to plan strategies to support their learning. Four areas of improvement were identified in the previous Quality Review report. The school has made good progress in benchmarking progress in its new middle school against similar schools and addresses the needs of transfer students well. Teachers use the City data tracking system to track progress and differentiate instruction in a number of ways, although differentiating by task is less well developed in some classes than differentiation by support. New teacher induction is now excellent.

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 school collects a very full range of information about its students, including, among many others, results of formal assessments, item skill analysis, Princeton Review, Scholastic Reading Inventory, diagnostic writing assessments and interim math tests. This data is gathered consistently for all students, grades and subjects. Teachers keep comprehensive records of their students' progress, including grades in other major subject areas to help them to understand and take account of their strengths and weaknesses in literacy and math. Every teacher has a very full data file which includes all relevant data, including previous years' scores for their students. The progress of special education students and English language learners is monitored using the Automate the Schools system. However, each student is treated as an individual, so the school does not feel the need to monitor the comparative progress of subgroups regularly. This means that it has not measured the success of some of its initiatives, such as the regrouping by performance in some grades for math, to find out whether or not the new arrangements are more successful for boys rather than girls, for example. There is one good instance of this. The inquiry team is focusing on the students in most need of improvement, using a very wide range of data to monitor students who are not yet proficient English speakers and forming successful strategies to improve their learning.

Progress is tracked longitudinally, so that it can be measured over time and comparisons are made with similar schools, including private schools. There are good systems for training teachers in the use of data. Teachers attend all relevant courses and have conferences three times a year with the principal to set goals and monitor their progress. All teachers keep comprehensive records and are using data well to raise achievement.

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 school's goals for improvement are clear and fully reflect its high expectations. The overall goal is that every student will gain a good high school placement and go on to college. This aim is shared very well with the entire school community. Teachers are aware of their role in this and feel accountable for their students' progress. The principal has regular conferences with each teacher. They go through the data together, reflecting on successes, problem areas and ways to adapt strategies to make instruction even more effective. The focus is principally on the students as individuals and data is used very well to understand each student's next steps and accelerate learning. Students are also fully involved, and data and its implications are shared with the older students so that they can facilitate the regular parent and teacher conference about their progress. The teacher listens in as support, while the student takes his parents through

his achievement to date, progress data and next steps. This process gives both parents and students real ownership and understanding of the data.

The sharing of whole school goals with the entire school community is excellent. This is done through myriad ways, including leaflets (What Did You Learn in School Today?), meetings, home visits and the very strong learning environment that pervades the whole school. Parents and students must accept the uniform policy, the work expectations and the school's goals while teachers agree to support and motivate the students. Communication between school and home is excellent and this helps to make the school's high expectations of homework and attendance very clear. Parents receive very regular progress reports and parent conferences and are phoned immediately if there is any concern. The school is always willing to listen to their concerns.

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.

The school has given consideration to the core curricular approaches that will best give meaningful interim data to help to raise achievement. There is an interdisciplinary approach to learning that begins in pre-kindergarten where work in art and technology provides a common thread to give purpose and relevance to work in other areas. Courses are chosen in the higher grades that allow links to be made between subjects, as well as providing regular interim assessments, supported by cross-grade planning meetings. The curriculum is very broad and includes instrumental instruction, chorus, sports, information technology and plans for French, Spanish and Latin courses next year when the first group of students reaches grade 8. There is a strong extra-curricular program of enhancement opportunities and the cluster program that gives students remarkable opportunities to become involved in activities that promote both achievement and personal development. They tackle real-world problems with help from professional photographers, actors, nurses, musicians and many other leading professionals as part of the school's philosophy that excellence comes through engagement and enjoyment.

The principal has lengthy conferences three times a year with every teacher, at which they go through all the teacher's data to hold them accountable for the progress that has been made as well as to discuss professional development issues arising from it. All teachers are aware of the need to differentiate instruction and many methods are used. These are successful and students make increasing progress as a result, but there is less emphasis on differentiation by task than by support. The last session of the day is used to provide extension activities for those who will benefit and, in some grades, students are assigned classes according to their achievement for math. Strategic decisions are made based on data, affect budgeting, staffing and scheduling. For example, when tests showed that students did not have a good understanding of compass directions, globes and maps were purchased for every room. There is a very strong environment of trust and respect between all in the building. This is led by example by the principal, who is revered by all and treats everyone with equal courtesy. Poor attendance and tardiness are not accepted. There are excellent systems to combat both.

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.

Very regular observations of lessons, varying according to the need of each teacher for feedback, supports professional development, which is very well planned in line with the school's goals. Much of this has concentrated on developing teachers' skills in the use of data to measure and raise achievement, and there is now considerable expertise across all staff. Informally, teachers observe each other teach and visit other schools. Test results are analyzed rigorously and instruction adjusted to make it more effective. As an example, it was discovered that in math, students' ability to understand concepts and to articulate were weak areas. Consultants were brought in, students' answers analyzed, professional development sessions organized, and every teacher made to concentrate on developing students' thinking skills. As a result math scores rose.

Teachers are able to share ideas at grade planning meetings and to watch each other's lessons. New teachers praise the support that they get, including help from mentors, and there are good induction procedures. There are very effective guidance systems to support students whose personal problems affect their progress. The school runs very smoothly indeed and discipline is very good, because students are fully aware, and respect, the school's very high expectations of them. There are very many highly productive partnerships with outside organizations to develop students' skills and welfare, including optometry and dental services on site, a link with a charity that brought a very large grant to fund excellent outside facilities and with the Midori and Friends Foundation that gives outstanding support for music.

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 is a dynamic and highly skilled leader, with a very strong educational philosophy and a sincere belief in the potential of all students to reach college. His ability to translate this into systems and policies that work, and share his vision with the whole school community, is inspirational. Along with his professional development team, he uses each plan's outcomes to plan for the next stage of the school's development so successfully that the school is regularly identified as a "gap closing" school. He builds teams and believes in the power of professionals working together to try out new approaches, reflect and learn. School leaders analyze results regularly and assess progress against the benchmarks that have been set down for each grade. Progress is reviewed periodically to assess teachers' effectiveness and intervene where necessary. This works well and has resulted in significant gains in achievement. There are good examples of adjustments to instruction, guidance or programs of study mid-year based on the evaluations of interim reviews, although goals are aspirational and so not always specific to the students. For example, in grade 5 it was recognized that students' inference skills were underdeveloped. A teacher with proven success in this area was given the chance to teach these skills to all classes for a short time to improve them.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Hugo Newman College Preparatory 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 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