



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Mott Hall School

Intermediate School 223

**71 Convent Avenue
New York
NY 10027**

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Dates of review: May 29 - 30, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Martha Madera

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Mott Hall School is a middle school with 424 students from grade 4 through grade 8. The school population comprises 3% Black, 86% Hispanic, 5% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 1% special education students. Boys account for 40% of the students enrolled and girls account for 60%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 96.5%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 62% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and the assistant principals have a clear vision, which is shared with the whole school community.
- The school provides a very safe environment and students' behavior is excellent.
- The school uses and analyses a wide range of data to understand and meet the needs of all students.
- Use of data ensures that students make good progress particularly in math.
- The use of technology is well integrated across all subjects to enrich the teaching and learning.
- The school provides students with an exciting menu of enrichment activities that enable the students to develop their interests.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the high expectations the school sets for their children.
- The assistant principals work effectively with teachers to support them in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction.
- Students are motivated and fully engaged in their learning and build strong relationships with staff resulting in confidence to ask for help and guidance.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop the work on goal setting to identify measurable, individual short-term goals, for and with students.
- Further refine interim goals in the different content areas so that progress towards annual goals can be more easily monitored.
- Focus on developing curricular approaches that actively involve the learner particularly in grades 6, 7 and 8.

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 Mott Hall School is a school where students are motivated to strive for the highest level of academic achievement. The accelerated curriculum along with the nurturing and supportive environment provided by the school sets the formula for the success the student body and their families aspire to. The principal and her dedicated assistant principals lead the school very effectively ensuring that teaching and learning in the school is of the highest standard. Project based learning is a special characteristic embedded into the curriculum. This is more developed in the lower grades. Teachers guide students and support them as they self-select topics of interest for project completion. The school offers a wide range of activities to enhance and enrich learning, through its adopted instructional enrichment model. It provides students with a variety of electives in the areas of music, art, chess, drama, foreign language, philanthropy, dance, stock market, and web design. Technology is used in the school to advance and enhance learning. Every classroom is equipped with a smartboard and every student has access to a laptop in every subject and classroom.

Since the last review, the school has used the analysis of data more rigorously and has set structures in place to support teachers in the process. In addition to weekly departmental meetings, there are assessment meetings where teachers and administrators review and analyze data in order to determine the progress students are making and the implications for instruction. The data specialist, working alongside the inquiry team, has transformed data into easy to read graphs, charts, and spreadsheets. This enables teachers to access the data more readily in order to make decisions at the classroom level and to differentiate instruction based on student needs. The inquiry team focused its work on English language arts, identifying 18 students achieving in the school's lowest third. The team worked to devise strategies to support the school in closing the achievement gap between the numbers of students reaching Level 4 in math as opposed to English language arts.

While the school is effective at planning for student and whole school development, it does not yet have systematic enough procedures for evaluating interim goals to monitor progress towards annual goals more easily.

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 and analyzes a wide range of data very well using both formative and summative data from multiple sources. It uses this to study patterns and trends and to identify the performance and progress of individual students, classrooms, and grades. As a result, the school is able to track the progress of individual students and has a very clear understanding of the performance and progress they are making. A particular focus of the school is the progress of special education students. They are well supported and, as a result, make good progress. While the percentage of English language learners is low, the school ensures that they are equally well supported. Due to this, they also make good progress. This year the school has scheduled weekly grade meetings, where teachers analyze the results of unit assessments and weekly quizzes and evaluate student work, discussing any implications for instruction.

Teachers receive training in the use of data. The data specialist supports this by creating easy to read graphs, charts, and spreadsheets that help teachers access and interpret assessment results. The school has also conducted intervisitations with schools within their network in order to study the way data is collected and analyze to improve and guide instruction in science. However, the network schools are not categorized as similar schools, which limits the school's ability to compare its performance with similar schools.

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 faculty and school leaders work collaboratively in order to ensure that the high expectations they have set for their students are met. The school leadership team gathers information from teachers in the form of surveys and focused discussions. They collaborate in order to review the school data and set rigorous, measurable goals including timescales for reaching them. In order to establish consistency across the different departments the school has established content area goals for all subjects, which include quantifiable annual goals supported by interim goals. In addition, the school identifies the strategies teachers need to use as part of their instruction to ensure goals are met. The school is aware that it needs to continue developing its work on goal setting at each student's individual level. The school does not yet have systematic enough procedures for evaluating interim goals so it can monitor progress towards annual goals more easily.

Through data analysis those students needing additional academic support are quickly identified and intervention programs are provided. Teachers make themselves available to provide one-to-one tutoring during morning and lunch time sessions, and students are scheduled to participate in the after school program. Special education students are also provided with additional support and are making good progress in meeting, or exceeding, their individual education plan goals.

The school is particularly proud of the number of students obtaining admissions into the specialized high schools this year. Parents appreciate the excellent personal and

academic guidance provided by the school, and support the school's high expectation and challenging curriculum. The school has effective lines of communication with parents and as a result, they are kept very well informed about the progress of their children. The principal's open door policy affords the parents the opportunity to come in and share with the school their child's learning needs and capacities.

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 offers students a challenging curriculum allowing them the opportunity to be fully engaged in rigorous work that leads to high achievement. All grade and subject meetings are used to monitor data in order to analyze the effectiveness of the curriculum units and lesson plans. Discussions that arise from review of data inform the planning cycle for the upcoming units. In this way, teachers engage in collaborative discussion to ensure students learn and achieve ambitious academic goals. This year the English language arts staff developed new units of study that are aligned with State standards and are very effective. They reflect a thematic approach and include content and performance objectives. The workshop model adopted by the English language arts department in the lower grades provides the students with the opportunity to be actively involved during the delivery of instruction, enhancing progress. This approach is not currently in place in upper grades. The school plans to develop this to develop student engagement further.

A signature and highly effective feature of the school is its performing arts program. It provides students with an array of choices, including instrumental music taught by professional musicians from Harlem School of the Arts and dance workshops supported by the National Dance Institute. The school's own art program combines the study of art history with interdisciplinary projects in social studies, English language arts, and math.

Teachers are held accountable for providing effective instructional approaches and interventions through supervisory observations, and reviews of students work samples, in addition to regular assessments of student achievement indicators. They are also trusted to exercise professional judgment. The school has highly effective systems in place to track absences and make immediate contact with homes. The systems of communication with parents are good partly due to the work of the parent coordinator who has done much to cement the relations between school and families. Students are confident that they could approach any member of the staff if they have a problem. They are motivated by the high level of expectations that permeates through out the school community and all work hard to make the school's honor roll.

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 cabinet uses data and frequent classroom visits to identify whole school and individual teacher's professional development needs. The principal and her assistant principals formally assess the effectiveness of teachers by regularly analyzing classroom performance data. Teachers attend off site courses in specific content areas. The school has employed the service of a consultancy that works with English language arts teachers

to support differentiated instructions and the use of conferencing and record keeping practices. During the summer, several staff members will attend a summer institute on “enrichment, learning and teaching” at the University of Connecticut in order to incorporate the strategies of this enrichment model into the established curriculum.

In house mentors who have a record of accomplishment for improving student outcome provide new teachers with support. In addition, the English language arts assistant principal conducts bi-weekly meetings to address topics and concerns pertinent to new teachers. The assistant principals have good skills in analyzing instruction and regularly give their instruction evaluations to the principal. They guide improvement and professional development in their own departments.

The school is welcoming to students, parents, and visitors. It is managed well and effective systems and procedures ensure that the school runs smoothly. The school’s two guidance counselors are part of the academic intervention team that supports the academic and the personal and social needs of the student population well. The use of partnerships with outside organizations is a strong feature of the school. Collaborations enrich students’ academic and personal needs further. Columbia University and City College provide student teachers to support students in math and science. Symphony Space supports the music program and Morgan Stanley brings the stock market alive in the math department leading to an “entrepreneur fair” that enriches the math curriculum.

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.

School leaders use data well to assess students’ progress, modify curriculum units, and provide academic intervention to students identified as needing it. The school has dramatically improved both the quality and the range of assessment information that is analyzed. Structures are established that allow for on-going revision and adaptation of goals. During departmental, grade and cabinet meetings, data is reviewed and discussions are held with regard to the revision of action plans. Teachers are supported as they determine if students are meeting benchmarks and if necessary revise plans to ensure they do.

The administration and the inquiry team reviewed the administered interim assessment noting that students were not meeting anticipated standards in the writing portion of the predictive assessment. Consequently, the school revised the English language arts units and focused greater attention on the improvement of writing. The school acknowledges that it needs to further develop and engage students in setting their own individual goals, and provide guidance in order to ensure that students revise their goals regularly.

Students receive excellent individual guidance and support. They express enormous faith and trust in their teachers and, as a result, work towards the highest of expectations. The school provides an exemplary learning environment that is dedicated to ensuring that all students succeed. The staff is very dedicated and acknowledges the enormous wealth of knowledge the students and their parents contribute to the school, resulting in excellent student achievement across the grades.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Mott Hall 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 X
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped