



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Horace Greeley School

Middle School 010

**45 - 11 31st Avenue
Queens
NY 11103**

Principal: Clemente Lopes

Dates of review: March 17 - 18, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Nick Butt

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

Horace Greeley School is a middle school with 881 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 8% Black, 46% Hispanic, 18% White, and 28% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 93.0%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 100% eligibility.

The school is divided into three academies of small learning communities, each comprising students from 6 through grade 8.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's excellent vision for the school has promoted its rapid growth and secured lasting change.
- Teachers gather data very effectively at frequent intervals using their own tests to supplement State and City assessments.
- Students in the greatest need of improvement achieve well because their support is planned effectively.
- The school community is fully consulted in setting whole school goals and sharing ownership of them.
- The principal and assistant principals make their high expectations very clear to students and parents, who rise to meet them.
- Great care goes into selecting and modifying curricular approaches best suited to the needs of the students.
- The academy structure fosters a culture of respect and trust between students and staff, who get to know one another very well.
- Attendance has improved considerably as a result of the school's outstanding procedures for promoting it.
- The principal and assistant principals use observations and snapshots of instruction very well to support teachers' professional development.
- The school runs smoothly as a calm learning environment because of consistently applied policies and procedures.

What the school needs to improve

- Disseminate more widely among teachers the best practice in analyzing and interpreting data.
- Consider the progress of boys and girls relative to one another in more depth.
- Devise ways to receive more detailed information from parents about their children's aptitudes and abilities.
- Ensure all lessons meet the full range of learning needs of the 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.

Horace Greeley School is a place where students are excited about learning. The principal's unwavering commitment to his goals ensures the whole school community is focused on raising achievement and pursuing excellence. The school enjoys success in raising students' achievement and in improving attendance because effective systems are in place and are consistently applied. The inquiry team has made good progress in setting up a longitudinal study of the performance of sixth graders whose attainment is in the bottom third. Members of the team are focusing on different target groups and are monitoring the impact of interventions on students' performance.

Since the previous review, staff are now much more proficient in using technology to analyze data, and some have created their own sophisticated electronic databases for storing and presenting useful information about their students. The school is now ready to disseminate the best of these more widely so that all teachers can benefit from using them. The school has employed two more academic intervention service teachers to enhance its team, so that they are fully involved with teachers in discussing how students are doing. Students most in need of improvement have benefited especially from this closer cooperation. Quarterly assessments now take place in all academic subject areas. While the school effectively analyzes the progress of different sub-groups within it, it could do more to examine the relative performance of boys and girls, especially in math and English language arts.

The academy structure is successful in creating families of students and staff who know each other extremely well. This generates a high level of trust. One student said, "The teachers are just like friends to me." Teachers ensure that the curriculum matches students' interests and needs well. The administration and senior leadership team involve parents, students and teachers in setting whole school goals, so that all are aware of them and buy into them. Teachers often differentiate their instruction to suit the learning needs of students, but this is not yet consistent across all classrooms. The principal and assistant principals frequently visit classrooms for formal observations or informal snapshots, and offer helpful guidance to teachers in improving their instruction.

Parents take pride in their school, recognizing the huge changes brought about by the principal and his assistants. One parent commented, "They are serious about discipline but loving towards the students. Everybody knows the deal." The school gives detailed information to parents, taking advantage of email and "voice messengers" to supplement traditional means of communication. However, not enough information is sought from parents about their children's interests and abilities. Only a small number are actively involved in the life of the school.

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.

Through their teacher assessment notebooks, teachers gather a wealth of data about their students and use it effectively to monitor progress. They analyze carefully where students show areas of weakness, and devise their own pre-tests and post-tests to evaluate the impact of measures for improvement. The administration compares the performance of different classrooms to identify professional development opportunities. The school gathers comprehensive data on its special education students, often contacting their previous schools to check that the information they hold is accurate. The school has identified its Level 2 students as needing particular support in reaching Level 3, and these are the focus of the inquiry team, who gather additional data on the individuals they are targeting. Special attention is given to tracking the progress of English language learners to ensure that they are placed in classrooms aligned to their level of fluency. Leaders analyze the progress of most sub-groups effectively, although they have not given enough attention to the performance of boys and girls relative to one another in math and English language arts. The school looks for trends over time and the principal meets together regularly with other principals to compare data and discuss the effectiveness of their programs. Teachers are now much more confident in using technology to interpret data, with some excellent practice from individuals. They are beginning to share their knowledge and expertise with colleagues, but this is not yet widespread.

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.

Teachers take opportunities daily to meet together informally and have frequent grade and departmental meetings to consider how students are progressing and to plan and set goals for them. Within academies, the assistant principal, dean and guidance counselor meet with teachers regularly to discuss students of particular concern and to make special arrangements for their needs to be met. The academy structure enables staff to know the students very well as individuals, so that a group of colleagues can each bring their own unique knowledge of the student to bear in gaining an overall picture of their performance. Teachers have high expectations of students and set challenging goals for them. A student said, "They teach us more than what we should be expected to know." This approach has benefited special education students and English language learners, with carefully constructed plans for their improvement and support tailored to their needs.

As a reflective school, the administration and senior leadership team are eager to involve all constituents in planning for improvement, and wide consultation governs the setting of whole school goals. The values of the school are made clear to students and their parents, and reflected in the school uniform, which is worn with pride by all students. Students take part in conferences with teachers to consider their goals and

the school informs parents regularly about how their children are doing. There are few opportunities currently for parents to give valuable information to the school about their children, as only a small number engage actively with the school as partners in their children's education.

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.

Teachers are sensitive to the needs of their students and adjust pacing calendars to take account of areas for improvement generated by their analysis of data. They adapt the curriculum to favor the students and to respond to their interests. Skill sheets are used to plug gaps in their knowledge. Courses are aligned closely to meet the requirements of the State and City tests, with practice built in that will assist students in passing successfully. Innovative work in math is now spreading to other subject areas, such as English language arts and social studies, with a greater emphasis on the use of writing skills in all subjects. There is good enrichment of the curriculum. The school has a strong reputation for its dramatic arts, performing *Guys and Dolls* last year. Students also take courses in graphic arts, computers and a foreign language. They won a City-wide tournament in tennis, and take part in golf, intra-mural soccer, basketball and running. There is a wide range of clubs for students to enjoy.

Teachers are making more use of technology in their lessons, as the school purchases more smartboards and carts of laptops. Lessons are often imaginative and involve students well in their learning, such as in evaluating their classmates' projects. Teachers are held accountable for the progress their students make and regularly discuss their performance with administrators. Most classes differentiate the work to suit the learning needs of students, but this is not always the case. The support for students with specific difficulties is effective, especially since the number of teachers for academic intervention services and English as a second language has increased. Students remain in their grades as part of an academy and have very little travelling to do between classrooms, promoting a calm atmosphere. The very good relationships between students and teachers built up over the three years they are in their academy, make learning purposeful and strengthen the school spirit of striving towards success. The school has devised exemplary systems for promoting attendance and deterring tardiness, resulting in rapid improvement. The school's attendance rate is now well above the City-wide average. Those who are absent most are targeted and same-day calls home alert parents. Any student who is even a minute late is enrolled in the school's "late literacy program", entitling them to an hour's after-school additional tuition!

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.

Observations and snapshots by assistant principals inform the principal on his daily walkthroughs. Leaders pay special attention to monitoring evidence of professional

development in classrooms. The coaches play a valuable role in supporting teachers, especially those new to the school and the profession. An effective mentoring scheme ensures that teachers have opportunities to visit one another's classrooms and to share good instructional practice. The principal uses teachers with particular expertise to lead professional development days, as well as bringing in consultants from outside. Teachers value the support they receive, and the flexibility they have to develop their instruction in different ways. One said, "They give you the tools to use but leave you feeling you are the expert."

The consistent use of rituals and routines enables the school to operate as a well-oiled machine, in which staff and students alike take pride. The uniform gives students a sense of belonging and avoids conflict over dress. One student said, "You don't have to spend hours looking at clothes in the morning!" The orderly and harmonious school community reflects strong leadership from the principal and the skilful support of his vision by the assistant principals through the academy structure. An assistant principal with responsibility for whole-school discipline releases other leaders to focus on educational development. Close links with a variety of outside organizations promote students' personal and academic development. These include Good Will Industries providing after school sports and arts programs, Inside Broadway and the New York Foundling Foundation.

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.

Teachers set challenging targets for students and measure their progress towards them systematically, making good use of their assessment notebooks to chart their performance. A well-structured approach to staff development ensures teachers have clear goals for improvement that are monitored closely by the principal and assistant principals. The coaches offer one-on-one support where necessary, and set up inter-visitations to enable teachers to learn from one another's good practice. The school effectively watches how its target groups are performing, and modifies practices and interventions to maintain the momentum of improvement. The inquiry team is playing a valuable role here in trying out new approaches with underachieving sixth graders and reporting back what impact they are having. Departments modify their plans well to ensure the curriculum supports students in taking the tests, breaking down the requirements into specific skills, and responding rapidly to assessment data. The instructional cabinet meets weekly to review the bigger picture. Leaders have changed the math curriculum and aligned social studies more closely with English language arts in order to improve student outcomes. The senior leadership team evaluates the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Education Plan at its monthly meetings and a sub-committee is charged with recommending changes. Dynamic leadership from the principal, whose inspirational vision has galvanized the school into rapid growth, motivates and empowers staff. One commented, "It's a pleasure to come to work." He has won the support and respect of the whole school community, who treasure the opportunities the school gives students, and who are optimistic about its future.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: HORACE GREELEY 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