



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Huguenot School**

**Elementary School 005**

**348 Deisius Street  
Staten Island  
NY 10312**

**Principal: Katherine Corso**

**Dates of review: November 20 - 21, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Frank Jones**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Huguénot is an elementary school with 225 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 8% Hispanic, 89% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 3.56% English language learners and 4.89% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 94.3%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is highly respected for her commitment and professional approach to the development of student learning.
- The quantity and quality of data collected is outstanding.
- The intelligent analysis of data enables the principal and literacy coach to identify and provide early intervention to meet the individual needs of each student.
- Parents speak highly of the school, the information they receive, and opportunities afforded them to be part of the educational process.
- Since her appointment, the literacy coach has made a significant impact on the curriculum and the quality and range of instruction.
- The principal has a clear vision for improving student achievement, and has identified and prioritized the steps required to accomplish it.
- Relationships between students are very good, as is their behavior.
- Students think highly of the school, enjoy attending, and feel safe, comfortable and confident in their learning.
- The quality of student work displayed throughout the school, enhances and enriches the learning environment for all concerned.
- The school has made rapid and significant progress over the past year and has strategies in place to enhance further the already good achievement of the students.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop the progress already made in differentiating instruction, to include opportunities for the extension and challenge of the highest-achieving students.
- Train staff to become more adept and confident in using the excellent data that is available to them for each student.
- Ensure initiatives are supported so they become embedded in the instructional practice of all staff.
- Continue to encourage all staff to experience and share best practice so they too remain learners.

## 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 principal is highly respected for her commitment and professional approach to the development of student learning. She is the sole administrator and therefore relies heavily on the high level of expertise that the literacy coach supplies. Between them, they have ensured that significant progress has been made in the quality and variety of instruction over the past year. This is symptomatic of the conscientious and effective way issues raised in the last review have been addressed. The school has extremely high expectations for all the students and these aspirations are being realized. The teachers have enthusiastically embraced opportunities for collecting, analyzing and utilizing data. Staff are therefore confident in identifying students' needs and able to initiate and implement strategies to satisfy these. The good use of assessments provides early identification of students' problems and promotes swift action to deal with them. Goal setting is now in place and is improving the quality of students' learning.

The recent rapid and significant developments have been supported by training, but this has not always been sufficient for all staff to maximize the benefits of such initiatives. This is recognized in the school plan for the coming year, which revisits and continues the key strategies previously identified to ensure they become embedded in instructional practice. Adaptations to instruction and the curriculum are central to improving the already high level of achievement. The inquiry team has made a good start in developing research techniques. These help teachers to extend the use of data and increase their understanding of its potential to inform instructional strategies.

Relationships between students are good. Parents value the school, the provision it makes for their children. They also appreciate the opportunities they are afforded to be part of the learning process.

### **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 outstanding.**

The breadth and quality of data collected by the school, is outstanding. Staff have enthusiastically embraced the opportunities that data programs such as 'Acuity' and 'Scantron' afford to enable them to have a very good understanding of what each student knows and can do. They also make good use of this information to identify the next steps in learning. As one teacher stated, "What's the point of teaching students what they already know." The intelligent analysis of data carried out by the principal and literacy coach is used to identify and provide early interventions to meet the individual needs of

each student. Proficiency ratings are closely analyzed and the knowledge is used to measure progress over time. Where progress is judged to be below that expected, then focused intervention quickly follows. In the lower grades of the school, student data, including that obtained from reading and literacy assessments is stored on palm tops. This ensures easy and swift access to data, which is up-dated constantly to provide an extremely accurate picture of the progress of each student.

Detailed interrogation of data is used to discern any patterns that emerge for the school, each grade, subject and individual student, including those with special needs or English language learners. This meticulous analysis of data identified that there was a drop in performance at grade 5. Effective intervention strategies were implemented and the situation was quickly rectified.

Teachers engage in conferencing with students and the information gained enables appropriate instructional strategies and groupings to be put in place. Students have their own portfolios which provide an up-to-date record of what they know and can do, and the progress that they have made.

The range and wealth of data available to all staff has necessitated additional training. The level of ability to analyze and use the information effectively varies from teacher to teacher. Not all staff have sufficient knowledge and understanding of data handling and analysis. This prevents them from becoming more adept and confident in using the excellent information that is available to them.

**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 use of data to identify what each student knows and can do is now well established. Teachers are refining systems to use this information to set individual and group targets, which is enabling them to effectively meet the needs of students. By using predictions based on data, the teachers set goals for students. They also identify the incremental learning steps required to achieve them. Thus work is focused on identified need. Close analysis of test results enables the school to recognize under performance and put in place appropriate teaching strategies to address the situation.

Special needs students are now predominantly taught in general education classes, following an assessment of the effectiveness of the pull-out approach. This showed that it was not addressing the students’ needs. Close monitoring of these students has established that their progress has subsequently increased. Similarly, additional support given to English language learners, coupled with an after-school academy, has resulted in all students succeeding in ‘testing out’. The principal and literacy coach meet with teachers on a regular basis to discuss and identify individual students who are under performing. This strict monitoring of performance and targeting of students informs the instigation of effective strategies, such as the implementation of guided reading and writing groups to enhance learning.

Parents are regularly supplied with the data about the progress that their child is making. Curriculum meetings and parent-teacher conferences are used successfully to keep parents up-to-date and involve them with their children’s learning. Parents and students feel proud to be members of the school and recognize the benefits that the small size of the school offers. One parent commented that, ‘it was small, friendly and like a private

school'. Parents speak highly of the school, and value the information they receive and opportunities afforded them to be part of the educational process. They appreciate the high expectations the school has for students, and the fact that these are reflected in their significant achievements.

**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.**

A well-designed curriculum provides rigorous and timely information on the progress of students. This enables the curriculum to be realigned to satisfy those areas where under performance is identified. The school works hard to maximize the benefits of its size and to increase the diversity of opportunities available to students as they move through the school. One student stated, "There are lots of great activities." Science, art and music are all used to enrich the curriculum and provide opportunities for students to widen their experience. The high quality of student work displayed throughout the school reflects the curriculum and enhances the learning environment.

Since her appointment, the literacy coach has made a significant impact on the curriculum and quality and range of instruction by working with and alongside staff. There has been progress in the ability of staff to match work to student need, but this is still inconsistent in some grades and leads to a lack of challenge for the highest-achieving students. The school recognizes this and intends to continue to support teachers with differentiating work. Discussions take place on an ongoing basis about the progress of students, and the teachers are held to account for the performance of their students.

The principal has made a conscious decision to use the budget to reduce class size. This has had a positive impact on the attention and time teachers can devote to students, but it also reduces the opportunities for them to meet in grades or subject areas. Relationships between students are very good, as is their behavior. This is because of the small numbers in each class and the constructive climate created by the principal. One student said of her, "She is strict, but in a nice way and doesn't shout." Students think highly of the school, enjoy attending, and feel safe, comfortable and confident in their learning. The high attendance figures are a reflection of this.

**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.**

Formal lesson observations by the principal take place, but 'walkthroughs' to monitor the link between student learning and instruction are infrequent. Thus ongoing information about what is happening in the classroom is predominantly reliant on performance data and the presence of the literacy coach in classrooms. There are opportunities for staff to observe other colleagues teach and those who engage in this find it a valuable activity and gain from it. However, not all experienced staff see this as a worthwhile use of their time and prefer to discuss the progress of students during common prep time. Professional development focuses on whole-school initiatives. However, some staff believe they have limited ability to assimilate the range of skills necessary to take account of the changes in

instructional practice. They cite the difficulties they have of coping with the demands of the introduction of smart boards as an example of these changes.

Teachers new to the school are given a mentor. The current mentee speaks highly of the practical advice she receives and the on-going help to improve her practice. The number of students requiring additional assistance from the academic intervention service or councilors is relatively low. However, there is comprehensive and effective support available to meet all needs. The school runs very effectively on a daily basis. Students are aware of what is expected of them and parents appreciate the adherence to the code of conduct, which clearly outlines the parameters of what is and is not acceptable behavior.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The principal has a clear vision for improving student achievement, and she has identified and prioritized the steps required to accomplish it. This has enabled the school to make rapid and significant progress over the past year and put strategies in place to further enhance the already good achievement of the students. The four key goals are allotted a time scale, and monitored to ensure they become embedded in the instructional practice of the school. Staff have had the opportunity to contribute to discussions about the future development of the school and this gives ownership to all those involved.

Regular assessments ensure that the teachers' knowledge base of the students is high. The use of this information has been crucial in adapting the curriculum and developing instruction to improve student outcomes. As a result of the Monitoring for Results measures taken three times per year, competent readers entering Grade One were identified as not making expected rate of growth mid-year or at end of grade One. As a result of this and also as a result of the number of first graders not meeting end of year benchmarks, Guided Reading was implemented immediately and for all students there was a measurable impact of this action on increased reading ability. The school is effectively monitoring and analyzing its actions. It uses this information to initiate strategies to improve student learning and build upon their achievements.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Hugeunot School</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>					X

### Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area?				X	
2.3 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				X	

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.**

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?			X		
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?					X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				X	

**Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?			X		
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?			X		
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>				X	