



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Mother Hale Academy

Elementary School 065

**677 East 141st Street
Bronx
NY 10454**

Principal: Tashon McKeithan

Dates of review: May 22 – 23, 2008

Lead Reviewer: George Wallace

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

Mother Hale Academy is an elementary school with 472 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 33% Black and 69% Hispanic students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 97% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school collects a wide range of math and English language arts data that is used effectively to monitor and modify practice to raise students' achievement.
- There is effective monitoring of the progress of students in greatest need and information is used effectively to aid their academic and personal development.
- The school successfully focuses on students' emotional and behavioral development which ensures a calm and positive atmosphere for learning.
- The school is highly efficient in the way it assesses students for additional intervention services to support all aspects of their growth and development.
- The principal provides very effective leadership ably supported through the work of a highly positive, collaborative and efficient cabinet.
- Students love their school and are delighted with the wide range of activities and approaches to learning that they receive, including a broad arts program.
- The school runs smoothly and provides students with a supportive, caring, nurturing and stimulating environment in which to learn and develop.
- Work with a wide number of partnerships is strong and supports students' academic, emotional and behavioral development.
- A good program of professional development for staff strongly focuses on the school's priorities for improvement.
- The school vision is clear, and staff, students and parents believe strongly that it is moving quickly in the direction of securing that vision.

What the school needs to improve

- Define sharper, measurable school improvement goals that are shared with staff and include regular and final evaluations to measure effectiveness.
- Enhance and consolidate the collection, analysis and use of science and social studies data and their contribution to math and/or writing skills development.
- Further develop teachers' understanding of the value of data collection, especially in pattern and trend analysis, and the links between data and goal setting.
- Promote consistency in the ways teachers differentiate their instruction, including raising understanding of students' preferred learning styles.

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 proficient.

This is a well-loved and rapidly improving school. The clear vision and very effective leadership of the principal, who is successfully reaping the benefits of a delegated approach to management, steers the development of the school through the work of a highly positive, collaborative and efficient cabinet. Teachers are committed, work well and provide strong care for their students. The hallways and classrooms contain a wide range of students' work and reflect a broad and interesting curriculum. Senior leaders are effective in their tracking and interpretation of student performance data. Findings are discussed and strategic actions taken. For example, a weakness in students' understanding of fractions was identified and the implementation of successful strategies led to improvements in their work. Teachers' knowledge of data through item analysis is good, but looking for pattern and trends in data is new. However, data is not used effectively to secure a comprehensive approach to differentiated learning. The school has a good understanding of students at-risk as well as identifying other groups of students that require support. Of note is the excellent work of the inquiry team in supporting students with social, emotional and behavioral needs. The school has very good links with external partners in this and other fields. Parents receive good information about their children's progress and are pleased that it is easy to make contact with staff.

The school is well resourced. Budgeting decisions have supported a good range of up-to-date technology and a well-resourced library and classrooms. Scheduling to provide grade team meetings is underway. A very successful aspect of the work of the senior leaders over the past year has been in capacity building for the future. Many strategies are used to monitor, support and develop teachers professionally. However, staff are not involved enough in determining whole-school priorities and agreeing the way forward. Current improvement plans do not focus sufficiently on these priorities or identify specific measurable goals and points of evaluation during the school year. Since the last Review, there has been good improvement in data analysis, tracking of achievement and continued improvements in ways to deal with students at risk.

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 proficient.

Since the last quality review, the school has successfully worked on improving its collection and use of data. Senior leaders in particular are well versed in collating, analyzing and using data to make judgments on the progress of students. Additionally, the interpretation of data is leading to new developments and refinements in the curriculum and approaches to teaching, especially in math and English language arts. The school knows its students well and monitors their performance in many ways, including their behavior and personal development. The school is therefore able to identify specific groups on which to focus, for example, those lowest scoring readers who also have emotional and behavioral problems. The successful work of the inquiry team has revealed strategies that boost not only their reading ability but also their self-esteem and motivation. The school keeps good quality data on special education students. All teachers of students with individual education plans know their goals. Progress of English language learners is also closely monitored.

Senior leaders interpret performance data well, especially that of math and English language arts. Consequently, feedback to teachers is good and strategic decisions are made on the strength of the interpretations arising from the data. The school has reflected on data trends and identified patterns, although this is not consistent across the school. However, there are many examples of data use to investigate patterns in relation to boys' and girls' achievements, or by ethnicity. Equally strong among senior staff is that of looking at performance trends over recent years. Although the school rarely compares its performance with other schools, staff visit other schools to benefit from observation and discussion of their practice. Teachers have received training in data collection, recording and use. They use data, especially to show performance trends in reading. In other subjects, it is less consistent and very little data collection is undertaken for science or social studies.

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 uses student performance data increasingly well to extend their understanding of students' progress and needs. Staff work well together and collaborate within different groups to deepen their understanding of different groups of students. Teachers use the process of conferencing with students to enhance their understanding of students' strengths and areas for improvement. Consequently, teachers are used to setting next-step goals for students especially in reading and math. However, rarely do teachers record any evaluative comments in relation to the previous goals set. Therefore, there is no record of the degree of success or models used with students to secure their goals.

The school, especially through the work of the senior leaders, is particularly good at identifying specific groups of students that require additional support, for example those with emotional and behavioral needs. The inquiry team has worked successfully with a group of these students who also showed a lack of progress in reading. The outcomes of their work have been very successful and the key findings are due to be shared with the rest of the staff to aid future instruction.

While the senior leaders are well aware of the key priorities for school improvement, the faculty and other members of the school community are not. Teachers recognize some of the priorities through training provided. However, there is no clear plan that links priorities with professional development and other strategies to support a common approach to school goals. Teachers' expectations of students' learning are high. Parents and students recognize this in terms of academic achievement and personal and social development. Parents feel well informed about their children's performance and progress in school and are delighted with the ease with which they are able to contact staff. Equally strong are the measures the school takes to reach out to parents and use the information acquired to support students' development.

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 proficient.

The curriculum is broad and has been extended over the past year. The classrooms and hallways provide a cared for and stimulating environment in which to learn. The displays of students' work show a range of teaching strategies, including practical activities, which the students thoroughly enjoy. There is a strong arts program and the core curriculum benefits from good quality intervention services some of which occur after school. In addition, there is a wide range of after-school clubs, including a book club in the morning for the "early-birds" and an enrichment curriculum to challenge the highest achievers. A good variety of trips and partnerships with external organizations aid students' development. The curriculum therefore provides the school with a wide range of data to assess progress towards the many goals set for staff and students.

Teachers are acutely aware of their responsibilities for students' academic, personal, social and emotional development. They, together with the rest of the faculty, have secured a stimulating environment with clear behavioral and social parameters. This work has ensured that behavior has improved significantly so that students now work in a secure, inclusive and trustworthy setting. Teachers have a good knowledge of students but do not always use this to set work for students, which recognize their different learning styles, abilities and needs, and this affects their progress. Good budgeting provides a rich range of resources and it has supported the expansion of the collaborative meetings program. Teachers and administrators are working effectively together to secure further improvement in student attendance.

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 principal and assistant principals have a common approach to lesson observations. Their feedback notes are precise and informative and focus on the important elements of a lesson that secures student engagement and learning. Whole-school training for staff focuses on the school's priorities for improvement. Professional development is valued by staff whose individual needs are recognized and met. The administration uses the core strengths of its own teachers to support colleagues for staff development. Opportunities are taken for intervisitations but these are reserved mainly for teachers new to the profession. Visits to other schools are common to learn best practices. New teachers are well supported and they work with a formal mentor. Support services are aligned very well to the school curriculum. Students have access to a wide variety of guidance and support personnel. The cabinet has worked well with staff to ensure that core values are very well known to students and are applied uniformly. One such approach is that of the 3R's, (be respectful, be responsible and be ready), which drives discipline, relationships and readiness for lessons. Consequently, the school runs smoothly. Staff deal with incidents quickly and efficiently and students are acutely aware of the school's zero tolerance approach to unacceptable behavior. Partnerships with outside agencies are extensive and well focussed on students' academic, social and emotional needs. One particular partnership with a local college is successfully developing teachers' skills in working with emotionally and behaviorally challenged students.

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 proficient.

School improvement planning is based on the Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal's personal goals. Both documents identify goals and activities that are highly appropriate to the school's circumstances. However, goals do not always include a clear measurable end product to evaluate success. Planning does not refer to interim points in the year when the outcomes of monitoring progress are evaluated and adjustments made if required. Teachers make periodic assessments of student performance and progress and use this information well to assess whether intervention strategies may be required. They log results of assessments and conferencing with students, and keep portfolio items to share with parents and provide a visual record of progress. Conference logs usefully contain students' next steps but no subsequent evaluative statement as to whether the next step has been reached. Senior leaders also track the progress of students' learning, especially in reading, writing and math. This has led to modifications of students' work and wider changes in the curriculum and teaching strategies. Senior leaders share their observations and assessment information with each other frequently but seldom formally discuss progress towards whole school goals. Nevertheless, an overarching strength is the principal's vision that is shared by the community that this school's untiring efforts are supportive of its efforts to provide a first-class education for all.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Mother Hale Academy	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