



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Henry Hudson Junior High School

Middle School 125

**1111 Pugsley Avenue
Bronx
NY 10472**

Principal: Hilda Bairan

Dates of review: May 2 - 3, 2008

Lead Reviewer: George Wallace

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Henry Hudson School is a middle school with 775 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 17% Black, 58% Hispanic, 2% White, and 23% Asian students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 91.1%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 85% eligibility.

The school has recently re-arranged its structure so that it operates as three separate learning academies. This reduces movement around the school except for use of shared facilities such as the library, auditorium and cafeteria.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school runs smoothly with students and parents valuing the academy structure which has promoted a positive environment in which students learn.
- The school collects a wide range of up-to-date data which is graphed in various useful ways and discussed by senior leaders.
- Senior leaders are good at tracking daily attendance, and grade and subject performance at periodic and annual intervals.
- Prioritization of and training in data analysis to support teachers' understanding of the value of data use to drive instruction and raise student performance is strong.
- The school has an effective overall professional development program that is well organized and focused on the school's priorities.
- The inquiry team's work is successful in improving English language learners' performance.
- The school has many good links and effective partnerships that support students in their academic learning and their special interests.
- Parents strongly support their school and appreciate the effective communication established between staff and administrators in relation to their children.
- Teaching generally engages students whose responses are most effective in differentiated "hands-on" classes.
- The principal provides strong effective leadership and is ably supported by three assistant principals all of whom are successfully driving change.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve the quality and consistency of communication relative to the school's goals between the administration and the rest of the staff.
- Extend teachers' interpretation of data, including interim assessments, in relation to predicting their students' performance on standardized tests.
- Ensure that teachers take frequent opportunities to observe each other's classroom instruction and use their findings to share effective practices.
- Further develop staffs' understanding and implementation of differentiation, through data use and an understanding of students' preferred learning styles.
- Sharpen school development planning so that each of its goals deals with one measurable and time-related issue and has interim points of evaluation.

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 an improving school. The principal and other senior leaders have a clear vision for the future well being of the school. They work effectively as a team and focus well on ensuring that the school runs smoothly. There is also a strong focus on school improvement, both through large developments as well as evaluating and developing smaller systems that bring about positive change. The main goals arise from the principal's personal review goals and the outcomes from the previous Quality Review. However, goals are insufficiently sharp and do not have measurable objectives or interim evaluation points. The administration is strongly supported by parents, teachers and students who welcome the positive changes to their school. Parents appreciate the open lines of communication and the information they receive about the school and their children's progress. The school is very thorough in collecting student performance data. Tracking systems showing student performance under various categories is very good. Teachers continue to receive training in the use of data therefore allowing aspects of differentiated lesson planning to occur. While differentiated instruction is evident in some classes, its practice is inconsistent. Students are most highly engaged when work is closely matched to their needs. Their learning is most effective when teachers provide early opportunities for "hands-on" learning rather than simply listening. Professional development takes many forms, is well organized and focuses on the school's priorities. However, communication between senior leaders and all staff in evaluating the successes and potential needs of the school are not fully in place. Therefore, corporately, staff do not understand improvement plan goals. The school's effective partnerships provide a wide range of enrichment activities that support students' academic learning and special interests. For example, the after-school enrichment program attracts large numbers of students who thoroughly enjoy the broad based activities. The inquiry team is very successful in improving English language learners' performance while driving up understanding of teaching such students. The principal provides strong leadership and is well supported by assistant principals all of whom are successfully driving change. One such example is the success made in five of the six former quality review areas for improvement.

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.

The gathering of up-to-date data is extensive. Senior leaders make the data easier to interpret by producing graphs of student performance on the basis of, for example, boys

and girls achievement scores by class, grade and by subject. Such data representation is increasing senior leaders' understanding of overall performance of students in each academy and throughout the school. In particular, they generate questions that lead them to identify specific areas of priority upon which to work, such as identifying strategies in specific grades and classes to reduce the number of Level 1 scores and increase Level 3. They recognize that there is still much work to be done in the field of data interpretation including the use of predictive and interim assessment data to provide a very clear position statement in relation to the whole school performance targets. The school undertakes further analysis with regard to the performance of special education students, such as comparisons in their performance between the types of instruction they receive. They take a similar approach for English language learners, who, in addition, have been the focus of the school's inquiry team. Their research has led to improvements in students' performance. A very important spin off across the school is the raising of teachers' understanding of ways to teach students whose first language is not English. Data analysis shows sound attention to students' performance over time. It is a product of such thinking that is leading to goal setting and mechanisms put on place to enable goals to be reached. The principal compares performance against similar schools, especially through an analysis of the Department of Education progress reports. Additionally the principal and English language arts teachers make visits to other middle schools and then share their findings successfully at grade and department meetings. Senior leaders have prioritized training to support teachers' understanding of data collection and analysis and interpretation. The school is beginning to see success in teachers' use of data to drive instruction and raise student performance.

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.

Collaboration between staff to set broad goals for student improvement is proficient. Teachers use the scores arising from periodic assessments to determine which aspects of the work they need to re-teach to the whole class, a group of students or individuals. Their understanding of item analysis is generally secure and this leads to some staff setting "next steps" goals for students. However, teachers' assessments are not aligned with State tests and therefore do not provide adequate information to assess and project student achievement. The focus is also exclusively on English language arts and math to the detriment of science, social studies or any other subjects. The school makes additional interventions for some specific focus groups. For example, English language learners attend Saturday school which the school has also successfully opened up to parents. As a consequence of data analysis, the senior leaders agreed, with parental support, to set up single gender classes. It is too early to determine whether this system is showing success or not. The school supports those students in greatest need of improvement satisfactorily. School surveys indicate that communication is good. The school produces an internal newsletter, circulated to all staff, about school activities as well as operational changes and targets. However, few staff are aware of the school's improvement goals and feel that communication from the senior leaders is not as clear as it might be. Teachers therefore are not feeling as if they are part of the planning for school improvement. Teachers' expectations of students' learning vary. Where teachers have high expectations, they challenge students strongly and give them significant responsibilities for their own learning. However, in many classes while expectations are

broadly suitable, they are often lower than they should be. Parents, on the other hand believe expectations to be high. They, in particular, are very happy with the quality and frequency of information they receive from the school. They are pleased that they feel welcome in school and find it easy to contact teachers to discuss the progress and performance of their children. During such conversations, teachers occasionally gather additional information that helps them improve their understanding of students. However, this is more of an incidental occurrence than planned.

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 suitably broad and includes a good arts program. The school operates a strong extra curricular program sponsored by a local foundation. Students thrive on a variety of activities ranging from dance, music lessons, chess, theater and designing and making small items from wood. Teachers know they are accountable for students' learning. Lessons vary in their levels of engagement for students; however, they work diligently in all classes following instructions as required. The school is safe and most classrooms contain pleasant and inviting displays to show and celebrate students' learning. Teachers are well aware of the school's emphasis on data use to enhance lesson planning so that the work planned more closely matches students' needs. In some areas, such as self-contained and other special education classes, differentiation is alive and well. However, the use of data to aid differentiation is inconsistent across the school and teachers generally are not discussing individual students in relation to their performance in different subjects or in relation to their preferred learning styles. The principal uses the budget suitably well. Scheduling takes due cognizance of teachers' strengths. A major management decision with budget, staffing and scheduling decisions is that of moving the school from a single unit to one with three more effective separate academies. Students indicate that trust and respect is growing and is much better now than in previous years. Senior leaders track attendance closely receiving daily print outs of various groups of students and the systems in place to improve attendance are working.

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 proficient.

Formal observations occur and meet mandatory requirements. However, informal walkthroughs are much less frequent. Feedback arising from all classroom visits is thorough and teachers are positive about the nature of feedback that deals with differentiation and class engagement. However, it would seem that several teachers are not heeding the advice and building it into their lesson planning. Such visits provide information about professional development needs. This information, together with an annual needs analysis at the start of the school year and the areas for improvement identified in the last Quality Review, forms the basis of the school improvement plan and the effective professional development program. New teachers to the profession take

opportunities to visit other lessons as part of their induction program. However, more experienced teachers rarely use intervisitation and subsequent discussions as a catalyst to improve their instruction. Overall support for new teachers is adequate. Guidance procedures are in place, however, students indicate that counselor caseloads are such that it is quite difficult for them simply to turn up unannounced for support. The school runs smoothly and although there are movement “pinch-points”, the school is safe and well cared for with displays that are respected. The school has several active partnerships. The SWETT program provides a very strong, exciting and well-supported extra-curricular enrichment program that includes dance, chess, photography, theater and woodwork. The school also hosts medical and dental facilities for its students and the local community.

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.

The school improvement planning cycle is weak because the school does not link different elements of the plan. The principal’s performance plan is clear and very useful. However, it does not cover all areas that the school needs to work on. In addition, those goals that are in evidence, for students and teachers, do not have interim evaluation points or clear measurable objectives. Too frequently the goals relate to several rather than just one measurable objective. The strategies to be followed to secure the goals are insufficiently separate in any planning documentation and therefore there is no clear indication of interim goals and time frames for the achievement of the overall plan. Teachers use periodic assessment data to determine the effectiveness of their lessons. Intervention strategies are successfully employed on a formal and regular basis for targeted students. As part of any strategy, students work well with teachers to identify specific target scores they will work towards for their State tests. In lesson planning, teachers are increasingly using their performance data to modify their practice. Senior leaders are good at tracking grade and subject performance at periodic and annual intervals. The assistant principals, who each run an academy, know their students very well and the performance and needs of their students therefore tracking of students’ performance and progress is increasingly becoming stronger. However, there is not an over-arching clear systematic strategy for driving the next stages of improvement, although it is evident that this is an improving school. School leaders meet frequently and uppermost in their thinking are the smooth running of the school together with strategies for school and student improvements. As such, the principal has a vision for the school and together with her assistant principals, especially her senior assistant principal, has the wherewithal to effect positive change.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Henry Hudson Junior High 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