



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Mott Hall III**

**Middle School 128  
450 St. Paul's Place  
Bronx  
NY 10456**

**Principal: Jorisis Stupart**

**Dates of review: February 7- 8, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Denis Pittman**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Mott Hall III is a middle school with 278 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 42% Black, 57% Hispanic and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 3% 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%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 85.4% eligibility.

The school is housed on the fifth floor of a building, which it shares with a public school. Prospective students go through an interview process and a summer orientation program if they are to attend Mott Hall III.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has very effectively communicated her vision and goals for the school to parents, students and staff.
- Data recording is very efficient and rigorous, enabling effective tracking of individual students' achievement and progress.
- Relationships between students and staff are very impressive reflecting a culture of support, care and mutual respect.
- The school keeps parents very well informed about their children's achievements through regular conferences and an innovative weekly progress report.
- The school offers a challenging curriculum, which it supplements by a diverse and interesting enrichment program.
- Productive partnerships with outside agencies and educational institutions effectively promote curriculum initiatives.
- Administrative and day-to-day procedures are systematically planned, well understood by students and promote a safe environment which support student learning.
- The school effectively and efficiently aligns budgeting and staffing decisions with its improvement needs.
- Well conceived and effectively delivered professional development opportunities align to the learning needs of both students and teachers.
- Effectively aligned monitoring and evaluation procedures determine accountabilities in meeting school objectives.

### What the school needs to improve

- Develop strategies for promoting the consistent implementation of differentiated instruction in classrooms.
- Improve the use of data to monitor the progress of special education students more systematically.
- Continue to provide support and training in the use of data for staff, to build confidence and competence in its application to improve instruction and its effectiveness.

## 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.**

Mott Hall III is a small school with a focus on mathematics, science and technology. It has a strong philosophy and a challenging curriculum, which emphasizes the preparation of students for high school and college. To those ends, it supports its keen and motivated students extremely well. There is a purposeful commitment to providing an environment that stimulates and promotes students interests and learning. The principal and staff have successfully developed a close community, which gives students the context and confidence to succeed. The good performance of students in math state tests is a consequence of this. The tracking of the progress of special education students and providing differentiated instruction is however not quite so rigorous. The school very effectively communicates its expectations to its wider community of parents through a weekly reporting process. Relationships between students and adults in the school are very good, reflecting the strong professional commitment of staff. Students are keen to succeed. Many take an active part in an extensive after-school enrichment program, which satisfies their curiosities. The curriculum provides challenging learning experiences and the school complements it by clubs such as those devoted to chess instruction. Teachers effectively build upon students' interests to promote motivation and engagement in their lessons. Efficiently and effectively organized resources align with the goals of the school. Parents greatly value the support and guidance given to their children. The strong collaborative culture within the school enhances an atmosphere of shared values to promote the happiness and achievement of students.

The school has successfully addressed issues arising from the previous Quality Review, which included identifying interim benchmarks to evaluate progress towards specified goals, greater involvement of staff and parents in that goal setting process and providing opportunities for peer observation of lessons for teachers. An inquiry team has been set up and has already met several times. The focus for the team is to promote strategies through data analysis for improving the math performance of struggling students in grade 6.

## **How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria**

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the student's progress over time.**

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

The school collects a wide range of data on the progress of each student from regular and frequent assessments using external and in-house assessment schemes. The compilation of baseline data is very systematic. For example, the data analysis of reading levels is well-presented and accessible to staff so that they can readily use it to inform their instruction planning. The rigorous collation of data in classes provides a comprehensive basis to systematically drive the process of improvement in students' performance. The data collection enables the comparison of the progress of different classes within the grades, and between different grades. For example, the analysis indicated that grade 7 students were relatively underperforming in English language and arts as compared with other grades. The school uses the data to hold class and subject teachers accountable for the performance of their classes, and it has a clear understanding of how well students perform in English language arts compared to mathematics. Class teachers keep a close check on the progress made by the individual students in their class. Performance binders and recording sheets are very detailed and regularly completed. Although there are relatively few English language learners staff effectively structure language acquisition and hence promote their progress. Diagnostic assessments help contribute to this process. However, the tracking of the progress of special education students in relation to their individual education plans is not so rigorous. The use of specialist staff and academic support programs provides supplementary data to identify issues, which relate to struggling students. The principal effectively reviews the progress and performance of ethnic groups and has a good awareness of the relative performance of boys and girls; the latter is not a significant issue in the school. Comparisons with the performance of similar schools, relevant to the school's context, are also systematically undertaken and, where appropriate, the school utilizes approaches, which help to drive up achievement even further. The school recognizes the management of data to improve the effectiveness of teaching as a continuing focus for staff training and development.

**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 school makes very effective use of the information it has collected in order to set next steps for individual students, classes, grades and groups of students. However, the implementation of objectives specified in individual education plans for special education students is not systematic. Overarching goals, such as the development of reading skills and the implementation of a remediation math program emerge because of an extensive collaborative process. The school effectively embeds these within the Comprehensive Education Plan. It expertly reinterprets the planning to achieve these goals in terms of interim measurable outcomes for students. The school has used its extensive data files to identify a specific group whose performance is in need of improvement. An inquiry

team is undertaking systematic investigation of a sample of grade 6, male students who are struggling with basic math skills. Team members skillfully and successfully utilize a range of strategies to promote the performance of these students.

The school has high expectations of the students in many respects, for example in the requirement for students to attend a summer orientation session and in the way students work together as a community. High expectations exist also for much of the students' academic work, for example in math, science and literacy. The school has established clear procedures for formulating an action plan if there are concerns about the students' progress. It shares this detailed information openly with parents. Parents are very pleased with the way in which the school treats them as partners in the education of their children. Use is made of a range of communication systems such as newsletters, handbooks, parent conferencing and workshops to communicate the school's expectations and promote parental involvement. One of the most successful elements is the compilation of a weekly progress report, which the school shares with parents. This has become a powerful mechanism for sustaining student motivation, keeping parents regularly 'in the loop' as far as progress is concerned and reinforcing homework completion. The school is being very proactive in endeavoring to get parents more engaged in their child's education. Many staff provide details of their cell phones and e-mails to enable parents to make direct contact with them.

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

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

The school provides a challenging and stimulating curriculum that students really enjoy. Apart from its orientation in math and science, the school has placed a strong emphasis on the development of reading. It has very effectively orchestrated the spiraling of literacy skills within the curriculum, particularly in relation to reading and vocabulary development. The school has enriched the curriculum with the implementation of a remediation program in math to promote the development of basic skills for some students. The high-quality curriculum provides a backdrop for teachers to provide interesting lessons that motivate students to work well and want to learn. This commitment by staff carries over to the extensive after school enrichment program. The school holds teachers accountable for the quality of the instruction they provide through regular monitoring by the administration. Grade and subject meetings are effective mediums for staff to reflect upon the quality of their work. These discussions enable teachers to be more skillful in the use of data. However occasionally there is insufficient differentiation of activities to meet the full range of student needs.

The principal continually searches for ways of efficiently utilizing the school's resources and budget in order to extend the learning experiences of students and staff. She systematically allocates resources to support the professional development of staff with regard to the popular enrichment program. School-financed trips and activities enhance the curriculum imaginatively. These factors are an important element in the promotion and maintenance of student achievement. There is a high level of mutual trust and respect around the school between staff and for students. Students get on very well with each other, being both considerate and helpful. Parents talk about the sense of

community as being one of the reasons for their strong satisfaction with the school. Efficient administrative systems ensure that attendance levels remain high.

**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 school strategically aligns professional development for teachers to meet both school and individual needs. It systematically follows up the objectives, which have emerged from surveys, department and grade meetings, in lesson observations and regular walk-throughs. The support that teachers receive for developing students' reading is exceptionally well focused and effective. Staff are very proficient in recording progress and in developing performance portfolios. Teachers value the administration's use of a familiar observation rubric that provides the context for them to gain informative feedback on strengths and areas for development. The school promotes the sharing of good practice through scheduled observation periods for teachers to visit colleagues and reflect upon the practice seen. Coaches also model lessons for teachers to improve the quality of instruction. There is an effectively designed and structured mentoring program for all new staff. Teachers enthusiastically endorse the quality and success of the program. The school is very well managed under the shared leadership of the administration. Guidance services, effectively complemented by a structured advisory program, promote the personal development of students. The school operates efficiently on a collaborative basis and this helps to reinforce relationships at all levels. The climate of the school is very positive, with good discipline, organization and communication. The highly productive partnerships with external group such as 'Chess in Schools' and the American Ballroom Theatre provide valuable personal and learning experiences for 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 well developed.**

Staff work hard, through regular individual conferences with students, to make sure that each student knows exactly their achievements and next steps for improvement. Well-established procedures enable the school to measure the progress of the different groups, classes and grades. The school clearly identifies intermediate benchmarks regarding student and teacher outcomes to ensure careful monitoring of progress towards larger objectives. The success of the implementation of the math remediation curriculum and the development of student reading skills are evidence of this. The initiatives related to improving instructional outcomes are part of a continuing evaluative dialogue with all staff. The focused work of the inquiry team has already established a strategy for using data to identify skill deficiencies in math and implement instructional strategies in order to raise achievement for a specific group of students. The substantial data held in performance binders, aligned with systematized conference notes, provide realistic but challenging goals for targeted groups, such as special education students. The school makes use of recent English language arts tests to revise lists of students

who receive intervention support services. There is regular discussion in meetings about formative assessments to ensure that the adjustment of individual goals so that each student remains firmly on track. The school has been proactive in utilizing more precise information from an assessment management system. This decodes data more meaningfully in order to inform strategic planning. The principal has a clear, comprehensive program for improvement, which has evolved from collaborative discussions with staff and parents. Through the hard work of the administration and their open style of leadership, the school is reflective and committed to sustaining improvement.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

|                                   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>SCHOOL NAME: Mott Hall III</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 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 |   |
| <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 and tardiness?   |   |   |   | X |   |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>   |   |   |   | X |   |

| <b>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.</b>                |          |          |          |          |          |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>  | <b>Δ</b> | <b>➤</b> | <b>✓</b> | <b>+</b> | <b>◇</b> |
| 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        |          |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>   |          |          |          |          | X        |

| <b>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.</b> |          |          |          |          |          |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>To what extent do . . .</b>   | <b>Δ</b> | <b>➤</b> | <b>✓</b> | <b>+</b> | <b>◇</b> |
| 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        |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| ◇ | <b>Outstanding</b>                             |
| + | <b>Well Developed</b>                          |
| ✓ | <b>Proficient</b>                              |
| ➤ | <b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b> |
| Δ | <b>Underdeveloped</b>                          |