



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Hostos-Lincoln Academy of Science**

**Middle School / High School 500**

**475 Grand Concourse**

**Bronx**

**NY 10451**

**Principal: Nicholas Paarlberg**

**Dates of review: February 26 - 27, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Peter Lewis**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Hostos-Lincoln Academy of Science is an early college secondary school with 507 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 23% Black, 74% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 39% of the students enrolled and girls account for 61%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 89.2%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 66% eligibility.

The school shares the building and some of the facilities of Hostos Community College.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The inquiry team has developed rapidly in supporting teachers in understanding and using data across subjects and the school as a whole.
- Data is used well in improving the learning of special education and the lowest achieving students, and those who are English language learners,
- Good support is provided by guidance services, which has a positive impact on students' academic and social development.
- There has been a successful emphasis on guiding and preparing students for college, which has resulted in increased graduation and transfer rates.
- A clear focus on the progress made by the lowest achieving students is effective in identifying interventions that successfully raise achievement.
- The school has made good use of its developing partnership with the college in improving students' access to a good range of facilities.
- The curriculum is considerably enriched by opportunities that are planned to develop the visual and performing arts.

### What the school needs to improve

- Develop teachers' use of the full range of available data in planning lessons that are matched more closely to students' different needs.
- Improve teachers' ability to make use of probing discussion and note taking in lessons to make lessons more engaging.
- Use feedback from monitoring visits to agree and communicate expected features of good teaching and learning.
- Use earlier student achievement to derive and set more precise goals and, through interim reporting, keep parents informed of student progress.

## Part 3: Main Findings

### Progress made since the last review

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

The school has concentrated well on developing the “Early College Initiative” of which it is part, in preparing students for college from their first day. Its success in this is seen in the high graduation rate and college class enrollment that the school has achieved. There is now a clear vision for the school’s development. Independence and high expectations are emphasized and students rise to the challenges that the school provides through advanced placement courses and a broad range of electives and enrichment courses. However, not all teachers challenge the students consistently at a high enough level. Data is analyzed effectively. This is particularly the case at senior levels where the principal, assistant principals and other leaders have a good understanding of the different patterns of student achievement. From these analyses, leaders plan appropriate interventions that have had a positive impact on raising student achievement. While challenging goals are set in relation to student achievement, these are not derived from their different starting points and so fail to be accurate predictors of students’ future achievement. Although teachers are committed to their students, they generally feel accountable for securing success in course or grade requirements, rather than in relation to the gains that students make from different starting points. Nonetheless, student progress is monitored well towards course and grade requirements, which means that the school is able to identify those students whose performance is slipping, and initiate remedial action in a timely way.

The inquiry team is using data to inform discussions with teachers on how best to translate assessment information into instructional practice. The literacy coach has ensured that good progress has been made in the development of data awareness in English language arts. Clear plans have already begun to be implemented to make use of this understanding in building teachers’ confidence in other areas of the curriculum, particularly in math. These initiatives demonstrate that the school has made progress in addressing the issues identified in the last review. However, there remains considerable inconsistency in teachers’ confidence in the use of data. This means that too many lessons are planned in relation to curriculum aspects rather than students’ different needs or understanding.

### 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 school has developed a comprehensive set of data, which it analyzes well in building a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses in student learning. School leaders, in particular, understand the implications of data very well and make good use

of the information in planning appropriate interventions that have had a positive impact on raising the achievement of lower attaining, English language learner and special education students. The school's focus on improving the progress made by lower achieving students has resulted in less emphasis being placed on gains made by those at the upper end of the achievement spectrum. As a result, higher achieving students generally make progress in line with their peers.

Individualized data is collated well, so that the school has ready access to information about the performance of students across grades, subjects and classes. This analysis helps the school in identifying areas of teaching and the curriculum that require support or modification. In analyzing differences in performance between subjects, the school has understood that one reason for comparative underperformance is the lower number of students scoring at higher levels. A good start has been made in using this information to inform developments in teachers' planning, and has been particularly successful in securing improvement in achievement in English language arts. As a result, teachers' planning is clearly drawn from an understanding of students' different needs. The inquiry team is extending this analysis through making good use of existing comparisons between English and math results in analyzing the progress of its focus group.

School leaders, in collaboration with guidance staff, provide effective support to teachers in utilizing data to plan according to the needs of all students. A recent development is in the work of the inquiry team in analyzing data and in discussing the implications with teachers. Its focus on lower achieving students has, for example, initiated discussion with special education teachers about the formulation and setting of student goals.

**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 quality and range of data that is now collated has helped the school in setting goals for students, identifying gaps in their learning and in planning appropriate interventions. The school is particularly successful in its focus on students whose performance is giving concern. The progress of special education students and of English language learners is given equal weight and, as a result, any slowing of their progress is readily identified and effective action is planned and carefully monitored. In contrast, the school is less precise in identifying the different rate of learning of its higher achieving students. While student goals are set in relation to course or grade requirements, the school does not set differentiated goals that are based on the varied pattern of student achievement at the start of the year. Together with inconsistencies in teachers' use of data to plan for the needs of all students, this means that they are not consistently challenged at a sufficiently high level. Additionally, this means that parents only have an understanding of their children's progress towards success in grade requirements, rather than in relation to their potential.

The school's strategic planning follows the required format. There is good collaboration at senior level and across grades. A particular strength is seen in the middle school, where the deployment of a skilled literacy coach has ensured the rapid development of goal setting, tracking and instructional strategies. This appointment was made, in part, in recognition of the inconsistencies with which teachers use data to inform their planning and is a good example of the school's well focused strategic approach. Similarly, the math coach formulated plans to extend the math curriculum, following data analysis that revealed gaps in learning.

**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 school has reviewed its curriculum to ensure alignment with requirements. In math, for example, data and curriculum analysis identified that students were insufficiently prepared for the March State testing. Immediate action was taken and the new math coach is currently developing a curriculum map to ensure that math topics are taught at appropriate points through the year. The introduction of the reading and writing college projects in the middle grades has had a positive impact on students’ literacy development. Collaboration, particularly through these developments is good and ensures that teachers are appropriately involved in planning and goal setting. A strength of the school lies in the degree to which the curriculum is enriched through, in particular, the visual arts and the highly successful school magazine. These strongly reflect the school’s commitment to promoting students’ reading and writing development. The impact of this expectation is reduced, however, by the limited development of students’ note taking skills. In lessons which follow a didactic style, for example, students either copy notes from the board or are left to decide for themselves the key points to record.

Through regular observation, the principal and assistant principals accurately identify strengths and weaknesses in student performance. These analyses prompt one-to-one discussion, which has built an appropriate sense of accountability. Leaders accept that there is some way to go to ensure consistency among teachers in making use of data to plan lessons that meet students’ needs. Appropriate plans are in place, which have the potential to address this, such as in promoting the use of ‘Acuity’ software. This is already having an impact in helping teachers to plan for different students’ needs in English language arts. In a grade 8 reading lesson, for example, the teacher used conferencing strategies very well in assessing students’ understanding, setting targets for their achievement and in confirming the accuracy of grouping. However, too many lessons are planned at a single level that reflects curriculum requirements rather than students’ different abilities.

**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.**

The principal and assistant principals undertake regular formal and informal observations of teaching which, together with the analysis of data, helps them to build a picture of the effectiveness of the school. This, in turn, informs discussion at senior level, between administrators and coaches, which leaders use effectively in deciding on strategies for interventions. Teachers say that feedback following observation of their work is usually helpful but are less certain of the features of best practice that leaders expect to see in their classes, leading to inconsistencies across the school. Teachers visit each other’s classes by arrangement and at the suggestion of coaches and assistant principals. This has been a strong feature in the development of strategies for differentiation in English language arts in the middle school grades in particular.

School leaders promote a strong emphasis on professional development. Planned opportunities derive from data analysis and link appropriately to the school’s priorities for development. The deployment of math and English coaches into the middle school

grades is a good example of this and is one that has achieved success in developing teachers' practice. The inquiry team, although recently established, has made a good start in developing teachers' understanding of data through grade level discussion.

Systems are well embedded for the induction of new staff. Coaches and assistant principals provide focused support. The strongly collegiate culture of the school ensures that new staff are included well in discussion within grades and subjects. Organization is smooth because of the need to ensure that the potential difficulties that could be caused by such a complex shared site are minimized. This has necessitated clear scheduling and organization to ensure that students remain safe and are certain of where they should be at all times. The school is effective in developing a partnership with the college that is extending student access to a good range of facilities. Guidance and support services are very well planned. Their work is informed by accurate identification of students whose performance is causing concern. As a result, these students make good gains in their learning.

**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 has developed rapidly in collating and analyzing data and so has a clear picture of student achievement across departments, grades and classes. Administrators and coaches have a good understanding of where students are succeeding and where interventions are required. As a result, support services and teachers are well informed about the needs of lower performing students and those whose achievement gives cause for concern. The school sets goals for its students that are based on curricular requirements and, consequently, are measurable. Interim testing is used effectively in tracking students' progress towards these targets. However, as the school has yet to take past performance into account in setting differentiated goals, it is only able to review student progress in broad terms and not in relation to their potential. Nonetheless, weaknesses in student learning are identified in a timely way, so that adjustments to programs and interventions are implemented readily.

The analysis of data, combined with information from observations of instruction is analyzed effectively at cabinet level. This enables leaders to keep a close track on the progress made towards achieving strategic goals. The involvement of the inquiry team has successfully broadened this discussion so that, for example, the rate of improvement in teachers' knowledge of the school's systems of assessment is understood well. Consequently, interventions are planned in response to changing needs and, at the same time, the school tracks the effectiveness of its professional development.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Hostos-Lincoln Academy of Science</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		

<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?			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>			<b>X</b>		

<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>			<b>X</b>		

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