



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

**Quality Review Report  
Office of Accountability  
2008-2009**

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**The Abram Stevens Hewitt School**

**Elementary School 130**

**750 Prospect Avenue**

**Bronx**

**NY 10455**

**Principal: Lourdes Velazquez**

**Dates of review: December 8 – 9, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Dov Rokeach**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Abram Stevens Hewitt School is an elementary school with 569 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 26% Black, 72% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 33% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007-2008 was 90.7%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 97% eligibility.

### Overall Evaluation

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

“As a community, we are learning a lot more about what students need,” exclaimed a teacher in response to a question relating to the impact of data. Under the strong leadership of its principal who is just beginning her second full year, The Abram Stevens Hewitt School has evolved into a true collaborative learning community that is highly focused on supporting the academic and personal growth of students and adults. As a result, school leaders, supported by staff, make strategic organizational decisions to help students accelerate learning. For example, the school hired additional English as a second language personnel and implemented positive behavior intervention systems in response to identified needs in these areas. However, the school has not consistently implemented the ongoing use of data to identify and monitor interim checkpoints.

The school embraces the need for ongoing leadership capacity through a differentiated approach to professional development that builds upon the expertise of experienced teachers and prioritizes the needs of new teachers. The excellent inquiry team serves as a springboard for deeper analysis of data and the use of the many Children First Intensive tools. Yet, the use of data to assess the progress of all subgroups is not fully embedded throughout the school.

The school effectively collects, records and analyzes a wide range of data in English language arts, math, and social studies to monitor the performance and progress of individuals and groups of students. However, the use of the data to differentiate instruction based on the individual needs of children is inconsistent, and teacher response to student work to identify targeted next steps is not always evident.

The school emphasizes processes to keep parents and students well informed about student learning. Parents and students express tremendous enthusiasm for the frequency of letters, interim report cards, report cards, goal sheets and individualized work plans that demonstrate the significant support and caring provided by the faculty and administration. Excellent external programs such as Turnaround for Children and Positive Behavior Intervention System contribute to a positive school tone. As a result of these programs and the shared commitment by school leaders and the community, student learning is accelerating

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has created a collaborative learning community that is well focused on student outcomes with a vision to continually accelerate learning.
- A positive school tone, augmented by excellent internal and external programs, supports the academic and personal growth of students.
- The school collects and reviews a wide array of summative and formative data to understand what students know, to monitor student progress and to share information with parents and students in most core subjects.
- Parents are key partners in their child's' education and are kept well informed of their child's performance and progress.
- The school's effective use of data to modify organizational structures has resulted in enhanced capacity to improve student social and academic growth.
- All teachers welcome the opportunity to participate in collaborative activities to strengthen their instructional practices to enable them to accelerate student learning.

### What the school needs to improve

- Improve the use of data in the school-wide goal setting processes to include interim checkpoints towards meeting end of year targets.
- Extend data analysis to focus more closely on student subgroups, especially the performance and progress of English language learners.
- Strengthen teacher responses to student work to include guiding comments and clear levels of performance, providing students with clear next steps for learning.
- Ensure that the wide array of collected data is used to provide targeted differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students consistently.

## Part 3: Main Findings

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

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The school collects and uses a wide array of data including formative and summative assessments, attendance results and Fountas and Pinnell reading levels to understand the learning needs of children. The analysis of the data enables staff to identify specific goals and learning outcomes for individual students. However, the analysis is not sufficient to identify trends and comparisons of school specific subgroups. For example, the school is unable to compare the progress of English language learners who participate in the dual language program with those who receive only English as a second language services.

All classroom teachers maintain and use comprehensive assessment binders to understand what students know and to identify next steps in learning. These binders promote meaningful data-driven discussion at grade conferences and during common preparation periods. The school engages in an effective, open exchange of information with parents and students with letters, interim report cards, report cards, and goal sheets. As a result, students are able to effectively articulate their next learning steps and know their reading level and its relationship to progress. The use of data is especially widespread in English language arts and math, and to a lesser extent in social studies. The school does not sufficiently imbed the use of data in other core subject areas.

The school uses data well to promote improved attendance and conduct. The school publishes attendance data, by class and grade, to provide incentives to students and classes who achieve positive results. The ongoing review of school safety data enables the school to analyze the performance of its newly introduced behavior systems, Positive Behavior Intervention System and Turnaround for Children. Students effectively articulate the required norms related to behavior and safety, and welcome the positive approach to discipline that celebrates success, but appropriately addresses misbehavior. Students stated that were especially pleased with the positive changes in school tone during this past year.

**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 school uses its grade meetings and common planning periods to analyze student data and to set measurable learning goals in English language arts, math, and social studies. Grade leaders effectively promote discussion among grade teachers regarding

the differentiated learning needs of students and next steps. However, the school does not consistently use these processes to establish learning goals, interim checkpoints, and next steps in all core subject areas. The school has established excellent processes to involve the entire school community in the development of the Comprehensive Educational Plan. Parents, teachers and administrative personnel think collectively, and these collaborations support the school-wide goal setting process and promote the development of a shared vision among key constituents.

The school's ongoing review of student goals at grade meetings and common planning periods enhances staff capacity to make adjustments to timeframes to meet the goals, when appropriate. Parents and students receive regular updates through letters, interim report cards and individualized work plans and, as a result, they are aware of the next steps required to accelerate learning. Parent participation in "Learning Walks" increases their knowledge of the school's focus and supports their ability to help their students. The use of Acuity at home and in the classroom extends the knowledge of parents and students with respect to their next learning steps.

The school's regular communication to students and parents regarding attendance, behavior and academic performance contributes to the high expectations articulated by students. For example, one student expressed enthusiasm for teachers who promote rigor by indicating, "hard work makes us smarter." "Starbucks" and other incentives help to celebrate success. However, teachers do not do enough to reinforce these expectations because they do not consistently include guiding comments and next steps when they respond to student work.

**Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The school has an established curriculum designed to meet the needs of all students. Dual language programs and freestanding English as a second language programs support the unique learning needs of English language learners. The development of highly organized, leveled libraries in English and Spanish promote student learning in English language arts and other content areas. The use of Everyday Math supports a consistent approach to mathematics learning throughout the grades. Teachers are using technology in most classrooms, and in a specially designed computer lab, and this is beginning to address the differentiated needs of students. However, teachers do not consistently use the collected data in their everyday planning and teaching, adversely affecting the performance of some subgroups. For example, there is limited evidence that students are grouped in ways designed to address each individual's next learning steps and needs.

The school uses its ongoing review of data to make strategic organizational decisions to meet the overall needs of children. Modifications to the science program, the hiring of additional English as a second language staff and the use of Fountas and Pinnell in every classroom are examples of the strategic decisions made to support rigor and coherence. The grade leader structure, monthly consultation and the use of common planning time help to ensure that the entire teaching community understand, support and implement these modifications so that students benefit from a more interesting and engaging curriculum.

School leaders successfully promote a culture of mutual trust that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults by, for example, reallocating resources to introduce behavior modification systems that have reduced incidences of negative behavior. The open lines of communication between school leaders and the entire school community create an esprit-de-corps that focuses on student outcomes in academic and social areas. Teachers express enthusiasm for these significantly improved relationships and appreciate the ability to receive feedback and support from school leaders and peers. Students fully appreciate the support provided by teachers and school leaders alike. For example, one student summed up the discussion by stating, "Teachers don't only teach, they care for us and help us when we get in trouble." Another student exclaimed, "Teachers treat you kind and that is what school is all about."

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.**

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

The strategic use of data promotes the identification of successful practices that build teacher capacity to deliver effective instruction. The school has initiated a highly successful differentiated observation process to support the diverse needs of teachers. Experienced and accomplished teachers may utilize alternatives to the formal observation process, by meeting with the principal and identifying a project that will accelerate student learning. Often, the projects include supporting new teachers. Data dialogue sheets, based on the Santa Cruz competencies, help to identify areas of need for all teachers and the school utilizes internal and external resources to address these needs. Learning Walks, based on recognized protocols, include parents and focus on a different 'Principle of Learning' each month. The Learning Walks help the school identify explicit strategies to improve the teaching and learning processes.

The firmly established school's inquiry team builds the school's capacity in the use of the many Children First accountability tools. The success of last year's inquiry team has led to the expansion and deepening of the inquiry process, leading to the identification of additional strategies to address the diverse learning needs of English language learners. The principal has established a protocol to get the best from teachers who participate in professional development by meeting with them to discuss next steps and ways to share their newly acquired knowledge and expertise with all school faculty, so that all students benefit.

The school utilizes internal and external programs very effectively to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students. All of its intervention programs, including the school's support organization, integrate fully into the school's overall support structure. The school publicizes and celebrates student achievement by identifying a student of the month in each class. Students, staff and parents alike recognize and greatly appreciate the value of highlighting the positive achievements of students to improve student motivation and their chances of success.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 leaders regularly examine data to make decisions about the curriculum and to improve student outcomes. Teachers and school leaders evaluate student progress by reviewing assessment data from a range of tests and assessments, including monthly tracking forms in English language arts and math and individualized student progress reports. However, some teachers do not evaluate student progress in all core subject areas. Consequently, interim checkpoints for individual students are not always available to enable teachers to identify whether they have met the differentiated learning needs of students.

The school regularly utilizes data to evaluate the effectiveness of organizational decisions and to modify them when appropriate. For example, the school's careful review of its Learning Environment Survey contributed greatly to the implementation of new programs to address areas such as school safety and mutual trust. Simultaneously, the school's review of its Progress Report and Quality Review led to the development and implementation of school-wide initiatives and professional development opportunities such as enhanced services for English language learners. The ongoing monitoring of school attendance data by class supports the identification and implementation of appropriate outreach and interventions.

The school's culture is self-reflective and focused on the improvement and acceleration of student progress. The well functioning school leadership team promotes a collective and shared school vision which focuses on student outcomes and which informs the Comprehensive Educational Plan. However, while school plans identify measurable success criteria they do not include interim checkpoints that would help the school identify its progress towards meeting end of year targets,

The entire school community recognizes the value of using objective data to promote ongoing school improvement and the acceleration of student learning. As a result, teachers identified becoming data wise and improving differentiation in the classroom as necessary next steps in the improvement process. Students and parents are very pleased with the recent changes in the school because they are true partners in the establishment of a mutually supportive culture that focuses on accelerated student learning and improved social and emotional growth.

# School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: The Abrams Stevens Hewitt School</b>	△	➤	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?				<b>X</b>
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?				<b>X</b>
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

## DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYQ, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

**Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.**

<i>To what extent do ...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?			X	
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?		X		
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?				X
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X	

**Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.**

<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?				X
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?				X
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?				X
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				X

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

<i>To what extent do...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?			X	
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?			X	
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?				X
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?				X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X	

**Quality Review Scoring Key**

Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed
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