



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

**Quality Review Report  
Division of Accountability and Achievement Resources  
2009-2010**

# **Quality Review Report 2009-2010**

**Samuel Huntington**

**Elementary School 40**

**109-20 Union Hall Street  
Queens  
NY 11433**

**Principal: Alison Branker**

**Dates of review: May 10-11, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Myrta Rivera**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Samuel Huntington is an elementary school with 547 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 6. The school population consist of 73% Black, 18% Hispanic, 2% White, 1% Native American, 4% Asian and 2% multiracial students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 91.2%.

### Overall Evaluation

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

The Samuel Huntington Elementary School is a warm and inviting place where the principal, now completing her second year, has effectively gained the support of the staff in communicating high expectations to students and families and she is creating a college culture through collaborations with schools of higher education. The tone of the school supports high academic achievement through the well-developed bulletin boards, posted signs of colleges and universities outside each classroom, carefully mounted student art work, attendance charts, student of the month bulletins, school goals and data charts. Everyone calls students “scholars” including the parents and the school’s goals and expectations are clear. Parents are highly involved in the life of the school and attendance in workshops and meetings has increased. The school plans all meetings on the same day to accommodate working parents and grandparents who take the day off and then repeat workshops on Saturdays. While academic expectations are made clear in language as well as the physical environment of the school, there is no professional development for teachers to learn about the social and emotional needs of students. This lack of attention to social and emotional support could interfere with their personal development and academic performance.

Highly effective data analysis forms the basis for instruction and intervention strategies at the school. School leaders have effectively organized the school using data to develop a cohesive instructional program that meets the needs of the students and resources are aligned to the school goals. However, school level planning does not involve all stakeholders including teachers and students in support of the direction of the school. Teachers engage in reviewing periodic assessment data, creating and revising student goals, tracking their progress and adjusting instructional practices to plan differentiated learning strategies that improve academic performance for their students. However, these assessment tools are not aligned with a focus on creating coherence between the curriculum, instructional practices and student outcomes and can miss an opportunity for student improvement.

Proving professional development on differentiating instruction is a high priority and lesson planning reflects implementation that is purposeful and aligned to the curriculum. Teacher teams are engaging in collaborative inquiry work that is fully implemented using a distributive leadership processes. However, there are no systems to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams or their use of data. In addition, the school does not regularly evaluate leadership development that supports teacher leaders. These actions could hinder teacher development and impact teaching and learning.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty effectively use a wide range of data to identify school trends, strengths, and areas of need that support school improvement.
  - The principal effectively reviews a comprehensive range of data to plan for an effective instructional program. The analysis of data highlights the need to focus on literacy to move students into higher academic achievement levels and a new literacy program is being implemented to address the needs of students.
  - School leaders, coaches, and teachers regularly review periodic assessment data to monitor student progress and adjust instructional practice. Coaches analyze diagnostic assessments every six weeks, providing teachers with feedback on skills learned and areas that need more attention so effective lessons can be planned. This strategy has yielded positive outcomes on periodic assessment data.
- Professional collaboration by teams using an inquiry approach is a high priority that results in shared leadership and improved student learning.
  - The principal facilitates the work of collaborative inquiry teams where all teachers track three identified students, plan differentiated instruction and adjust instructional materials and strategies as needed. Improved academic outcomes have been noted on periodic assessment data and teachers share their work in an inquiry newsletter distributed to staff and parents.
  - In order to provide a seamless instructional program, a team of teachers meet weekly to look at student progress and align their instructional strategies for English language learners receiving services during the day and in a Title 3 after-school program. As a result, these students have shown improvement in vocabulary development as they accelerate their English proficiency through this coordinated approach.
- Effective strategic organizational decisions support the school's instructional goals to maximize student learning.
  - The principal has strategically used the school budget to support the needs of student subgroups and students in need of additional support through the hiring of an additional Title I teacher for the implementation of a phonics based program for non-readers. This program is showing success by students completing the program early. This curricular strategy supports the overall school goal of accelerating student academic achievement via literacy improvement.
  - Teacher teams meet regularly to discuss the progress of their targeted students and share their work and instructional strategies with their peers through collaborative inquiry work. Teachers share instructional resources and strategies proven successful with their targeted students and discuss adjustments to teaching practices and materials that have improved student outcomes. Hence, teachers have developed a collaborative approach to discuss student needs and focus instruction to target areas for improvement.

- The principal and staff communicate high expectations to students and their families regarding academics and parental involvement that supports increased academic performance.
  - School leaders and faculty promote high expectations through their collaboration with various universities to increase student's desire to achieve. The collaboration involves placement of student teachers, volunteers, visits to the university by students and parents in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and parent workshops. The entire school community calls students "scholars" and every class is associated with a school of higher education. Students and their families visit these universities as part of class trips and students say their goal is to get high marks so they can attend college.
  - The school promotes the involvement of parents and accommodates them by offering all parent meetings and workshops on the same day so parents can become more involved in the life of the school. This action has increased attendance at school-wide events and support parent leaders in making decisions about the use of Title I funds to increase parental involvement.
- Teachers use and analyze data, set individual goals and track their progress to accelerate student progress.
  - Teachers create Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Framed (SMART) goals based on data for each student and monitor their progress towards reaching their goals. Results of periodic and classroom assessments inform revisions to these goals. Students report that teachers confer with them regarding their goals and discuss their progress and next learning steps while revising their goals. Reporting information to families is consistent across grades through the Monthly Goals Progress report.
  - The sixth grade inquiry team focuses on how to assist targeted students improve their writing skills using the four square method. These students benefit from differentiated learning goals and an analysis of student work and data by a group of teachers who share their professional expertise. Due to its success, the school plans to expand this strategy next year.
- Classroom instruction aligns to the curriculum and promotes differentiated instructional strategies that meet the needs of all students.
  - Differentiating instruction is a top priority in the school. Teachers use the workshop model and group for instruction based on data, interests, needs and learning styles. This instructional approach provides students with targeted instruction that meets their needs, leads to increased academic performance for all learners, and ensures multiply entry points.
  - Classroom routines and teaching strategies show a systemic approach to delivering rigorous instruction to provide students the opportunity to be successful. Student work products reflect a general level of student engagement and thinking.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Develop a system to evaluate regularly the effectiveness of teacher teams engaged in collaborative inquiry and in leadership development that supports teacher leaders.

- Teacher teams organizing in a short time are involved in collaborative inquiry work. However, the principal has not evaluated the effectiveness of these new teams yet so that supports and improvements can be made to accelerate student learning.
- All teachers participate in inquiry teams featuring distributive leadership and share responsibility for producing agenda items. Yet, the school does not regularly evaluate the leadership development opportunities that support distributive leadership thus missing an opportunity to more deeply support the development of teacher leaders.
- Develop internal capacity and/or external partnerships that promote the social emotional development of students and their families and professional development for staff to support the personal development of students.
  - The school has provided monthly themes of tolerance, a respect for all campaign, to enable teachers to consistently support bullying prevention programs for students. However, there is no professional development for teachers to support students' social/emotional needs.
  - The school has partnerships that support the cultural aspect of student's lives but there are a growing number of grandparents as caretakers who are not being supported. There are no programs that support students' and families' social/emotional aspects of life, which could interfere with their personal development and academic performance.
- Expand established structures to evaluate systems for gathering data and assessing student outcomes to maximize effective school-wide practices.
  - While the school has developed many assessment tools and evaluates its effectiveness periodically, it has not aligned these activities with a focus on creating coherence between the curriculum, instructional practices and student outcomes. A regular review of assessment data has lead to adjustments in the way data is organized for teachers to use in differentiating instruction. However, there are no systems for evaluating the use of data by teacher teams using inquiry collaborative processes with a focus on building alignment and coherence between data tools and their work on teams.
- Provide opportunities for faculty to become involved in school level planning processes so there is a broad base support for the school's direction.
  - School leaders create school goals and action plans based on data. However, school level planning does not involve teachers to generate a broad base of support for the direction of the school. The results of the Learning Environment Survey support this lack of involvement.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

<b>School name: Samuel Huntington School</b>	△	▶	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	△	▶	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				<b>X</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	▶	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?				<b>X</b>
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X				
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X				
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school..</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			X				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				X			
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X				
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?		X					
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school..</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?			X				
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		X					
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>