

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

Lorraine Hansberry

Elementary School 118

**109-20 109th Road
Queens
NY 11412**

Principal: Cynthia Ofori Feaster

Dates of review: March 18 – 19, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Lenon Murray

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Lorraine Hansberry School is an elementary school with 656 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 82% Black, 10% Hispanic, 3% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 10% 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 92.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

This high performing school's new principal brings strong ideas for expanding even further the teaching of core subjects. To achieve this, the school has engaged in a process of emphasizing key standards to better meet the needs of and prepare students for State testing and a majority of teachers use differentiated instruction in their instructional practice. However, the principal has not yet garnered full support to achieve this effort of a common instructional focus. School leaders have aligned the use of time, space, and budget to support the school goals. Teacher teams are provided with time to meet regularly, and coaches have rolled out the scope and sequence of the new approach. A vast majority of teachers works collaboratively together and the process of inquiry is in place at the school.

Parents and faculty both feel fully invested in a positive outcome for the students of the school. School leaders and faculty interrogate a wide range of data to determine trends and weaknesses. The practice of designing school-wide formative assessments, and the subsequent analysis of data, enables staff to provide students with suitable academic intervention support. Data is also used well to review school programs, make necessary adjustments, and plan for future needs of the school and the students. However, a full complement of constituents is not sufficiently involved in this process.

The school is most proud of its recent academic record. There is an increased focus on writing across all subject areas including the need for strong penmanship. The best practices from literacy are being infused into the teaching of science and social studies. Yet, parents claim to be unaware of some of their children's academic progress and there is concern about the inability to maintain a respectful tone in the building, thus hindering good communication between all members of the school community.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty align curricula to State standards and make purposeful decisions to emphasize key standards based on the needs of students across grades and subject areas.
 - The school leaders and faculty have done a great deal of work to align curricula to State standards. The school has moved away from a primary emphasis on English language arts and math to a broader emphasis that includes science, social studies, and the arts. This has led to students' covering a larger amount of content in preparation for high-stakes testing.
 - By school leadership de-emphasizing the workshop model as the prevalent model of instruction, teachers are encouraged to use an eclectic instructional approach more tailored to teachers' strengths and students' needs. This is resulting in a greater use of differentiated instruction using a multiple entry point approach.
- School leaders align the use of resources including budget, space, and professional development coaches, to the school's instructional goals and long-range plans to increase student performance.
 - School leaders have retained literacy and math coaches in spite of a difficult budget situation because they believe that teachers would benefit from support in strengthening of their content knowledge and improving their pedagogy. This has resulted in a larger number of model lessons and job-embedded coaching sessions, with an eye towards targeting and improving literacy instruction across all subject areas.
 - School administration has a dedicated time for its central inquiry team and grade-level teacher teams to meet to discuss methods for addressing the needs of struggling students.
- School leaders and faculty regularly gather and analyze a range of summative data needed to create an overview of the school's strengths and areas of need to increase student achievement.
 - The school leaders and the data specialist gather and analyze data continually and speak knowledgeably about the direction the school needs to go. Although the school has been a high performing school for several years, the principal has identified areas in the teaching of social studies and science that need to be honed.
 - The school analyzes subgroup data to develop intervention plans for special needs students and English language learners (ELL). This has led to ELL's and special education teachers taking increased responsibility for working with struggling students.
- Individual teachers and teacher teams analyze data to identify which students need additional supports and set differentiated goals to accelerate their learning.

- Teachers have gained confidence using in-house assessments such as rubrics, and they review student work, to identify struggling students and develop successful intervention strategies that increase student achievement.
- Teachers use periodic assessments and ARIS to gain a clear picture of student performance and set curriculum-based goals for next steps in teaching and learning, targeted to raising student achievement.
- A vast majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaboration on teams, using an inquiry approach to improve student performance.
 - Coaches work alongside inquiry team members to heighten the data expertise of grade-wide members. As a result, teachers throughout the school are becoming increasingly adept at using a variety of data sources. This approach supports administration's idea of using data to identify and address student needs around literacy as a foundation for strengthening students' content knowledge.
 - Teachers are provided with opportunities in their weekly planning periods to lead in data-analysis, curricular decision making, and professional development, leading to coherence of practice across grades.
- The school engages in long-term planning and monitors and revises plans based on evidence of student performance to improve student achievement.
 - The administrative cabinet and school leadership team continually discuss and plan for the long-term benefit of the school. Their focus on identifying and addressing curricular deficiencies is resulting in school-wide improvement.
 - The school places a great deal of reliance on results from periodic assessments and school-generated formative assessments to determine the success of its instructional practices. They use this information to broaden their emphasis on teaching and learning thus supporting improved student outcomes.

What the school needs to improve

- Address issues related to the school environment to improve collaboration among staff and parents.
 - Teachers and parents appreciate the curricular and academic goals of the new principal but are concerned about the communication throughout the building. Currently, the school's culture does not sufficiently include open discussions about ways to enhance the school community and set a respectful tone to benefit students.
- Improve the practice of providing feedback to students and families on students' progress and opportunities for support and enrichment to increase family involvement in student achievement

- Some teachers are excellent at providing progress reports to parents, sending notes home and making phone calls to discuss student challenges. However, this is not yet a widespread practice throughout the school.
- Increase the understanding among faculty for the need of a common instructional focus to create a school-wide culture around best practices.
 - All staff have, not yet accepted changes in curriculum and pedagogy proposed by the new administration. As a result, the division among the staff is hindering progress in this area.
- Refine the structures in place to regularly evaluate and adjust curricular and instructional practices in response to student learning needs.
 - Currently, formal evaluation structures reside in the administrative cabinet and the school leadership team. The school does not yet include a sufficiently large enough cross-section of faculty members and parents in order that the entire school community accepts changes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Lorraine Hansberry	△	▷	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<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?			X	
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?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			X	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X	
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.				
<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?			X	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			X	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

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.							
<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				
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X				
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.							
<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				
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X				
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.							
<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				
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed