

# Quality Review Report 2009-2010

**Mother Hale Academy**

**Elementary School 065**

**677 East 141<sup>st</sup> Street**

**Bronx**

**NY 10454**

**Principal: Tashon McKeithan**

**Dates of review: April 12-13, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Yolanda Torres**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Mother Hale Academy is an elementary school with 420 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 28% Black, 69% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian, and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 26% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 90%.

### Overall Evaluation

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

Mother Hale Academy is a well-known school in the community due to the many memories it holds. Parents, many of whom previously attended the school, see the school as an important part of their lives. Parents acknowledge that the increase of technology in classrooms motivates their children to learn. They appreciate the training on ARIS Parent Link and its value. The school motto "Succeed, Achieve, and Believe" represents the school's mission to motivate the students to learn and grow. The school has instituted a school-wide reading goal, which is prominently displayed in the hallway. Students and teachers contribute to this goal by sharing the number of books read throughout the school year. A healthy competition amongst classes is the result, thus motivating the students to read and achieve. In addition, students have begun to understand the importance of reading and how it helps them progress.

The principal uses the information from the Learning Environment Survey to implement new structures to communicate with teachers, thereby providing them with more opportunities to get involved in school-wide decision-making processes. Teacher involvement in the school improvement team is leading to the development of leadership qualities and sense of ownership in the teaching and learning focus of the school.

The hallways and classrooms display student work with teacher feedback encouraging student reflection and response. Although the school has developed assessment tools and feedback protocols for students and parents, the next steps towards attaining proficiency remain unclear across all subjects. After careful data analysis, the school has made organizational decisions about curriculum, resources and teacher planning which address the instructional needs to support student learning. In order to build coherence across contents and grades, the school has scheduled regular meeting times for teachers to plan together, align their instructional goals and identify grade-wide trends. In spite of these efforts, instruction is inconsistent.

The collaborative inquiry teacher teams focus their conversations around data analysis to inform their practice and influence the learning of the targeted students. This process helps teachers hone in on specific strategies and challenges them to problem-solve with their colleagues on next steps towards student academic improvement. Teachers are beginning to see the value in turning to one another to learn and grow professionally. As teachers participate in a variety of professional development sessions to support their teaching needs, there is no evidence of differentiated goals for teachers to improve instruction and enhance student learning.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Teacher teams engage in the collaborative inquiry process and in collegial visitations resulting in the improvement of teaching practices and student performance.
  - Teachers see inquiry as a learning opportunity where they look at students with a closer lens and articulate teaching strategies with their colleagues. They appreciate the good communication with colleagues from different grades. Once the strategies are successful with their targeted students, teachers put them into practice with a larger scale of students and compare results.
  - Teachers use Inquiry Spaces on ARIS to memorialize and communicate their work internally. This process helps teachers align their practice and provide differentiated support to students. They are able to learn from each other's strengths, take the successful strategies, and customize them to their classroom needs.
- The school's organization and use of resources help to support the school-wide goal around student learning.
  - The school schedule and resources are aligned to the academic needs of students. In tandem with the guided reading period, guided math delivery takes place on a daily basis for all students. This school-wide decision affords teachers the opportunity to conference with students and look at individualized math strategies to support their needs. Teachers monitor and assess student progress through grand conversations, conferences and rubrics. Students also take note of their progress and next steps towards their individual learning.
- Parents appreciate the communication with the school in support of the academic, social and emotional needs of their children.
  - According to parents, the school understands the diverse needs of the community at large. Parents see the school's efforts in providing families with monthly newsletters and workshops focused on education, but also on the social and emotional aspects of their home lives. Parents attend the Saturday Academy with their children and participate in workshops that support their needs and their children's needs such as preparing for the upcoming standardized tests.
  - School leaders and teachers engage in conversations with parents on how students learn best. They take parent feedback very seriously to ensure they meet parents' needs. The principal attends the Parent Teacher Association meetings to render her monthly school report to parents in order to ensure that there is an aligned communication amongst the varied teams within the school and that parents are well informed of the decisions made and services provided.
- Teacher feedback to student work consistently provides students with strong, detailed next steps towards academic improvement.

- The school developed a goals and objectives feedback sheet, which informs students on how they are performing in their varied pieces of work. Teachers update the regularly to meet the expected outcome of the unit at hand. At the end of the unit, the teachers assess student performance and inform them on their progress.
- Student work displayed on bulletin boards and in students' portfolios has evidence of teacher feedback with specific next steps for continued improvement. In addition, students engage in reciprocal feedback to teacher observation or assessment by providing their own evidence for improvement. Students have embraced this process and have taken ownership of their learning through this process.
- The school provides a content-specific curriculum that addresses the standards and supports student learning.
  - Establishing partnerships with the arts and environmental science organizations has afforded students the opportunity to connect their classroom learning to real world experiences. Upon their return from school trips, students enthusiastically share their experiences through reflective writing. Some of this work is part of the district-wide gallery of writing.
  - The curricula strategically address the school-wide instructional goals and students' individual academic needs for proficiency improvement. School leaders provide teachers with resources and instructional strategies focused on grade and content expectations to ensure that students engage in meaningful learning.
- There is evidence of measuring interim progress towards the attainment of long-term targets.
  - The school has established periodic benchmarks in English language arts to assess students' progress. These interim checkpoints inform both teachers and students on whether students are on track or if some re-teaching is to take place to reach the long-term target.
  - Focused guided reading and guided math small group work are two instructional decisions for school-wide implementation. This strategic, school-wide decision has helped develop consistency across grades where teachers are constantly assessing its effectiveness through the monitoring of student progress in order to meet long-term goals.

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

- Ensure that teachers develop differentiated goals for professional development support as an outgrowth of the observation process to enhance their teaching skills and improve student learning.
  - As school leaders conduct formal and informal observations, they provide teachers with feedback for the improvement of their practice. Although this feedback aligns to a variety of support structures for teachers such as mentoring, coaching or attendance at professional development sessions, teacher differentiated goals are not in place this year.

- The principal indicates that the school improvement team is looking at the professional teaching standards to support teacher practice and future planning in order to improve the teaching and learning. Nonetheless, there is a lack of evidence that these standards are consistent in teacher planning and lesson delivery.
- Sharpen the assessment tools to provide consistent information to families on student proficiency.
  - The school has created protocols and grade-specific progress reports to inform parents on the academic progress of their children. However, the feedback provided to families is unclear leading to some uncertainty on how to help their children at home and track their progress.
- Establish consistency in the alignment of key state standards with data analysis, curriculum and teacher practice that are rigorous in nature and appropriately leveled to meet the needs of students, especially the high achievers.
  - There are pockets of sound instruction throughout the building that shed light on the initial understanding of how to plan standards-based lessons that meet the differentiated needs of all students. There is still inconsistent evidence to support that this practice is being effectively implemented across all subject areas in all grades.
  - Teacher teams have data-driven conversations to provide targeted students with appropriate lessons that focus on their learning needs. Although these conversations enable teachers to analyze data and share effective practices, the lack of consistent rigorous academic discourse deprives students of high-level learning.
- Expand the team processes to include teachers as leaders to build a collaborative school environment.
  - Teacher participation in collaborative inquiry teams affords them the opportunity to lend a voice to school-wide instructional and organizational decisions and serve as the conduit of information to their grade colleagues. Due to the newness of this structured professional collaboration, there is a lack of a systemic process to assess the effectiveness of capacity building and leadership development process.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

<b>School name: Mother Hale Academy</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+
<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>	Δ	▷	✓	+
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>	Δ	▷	✓	+
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>