

Quality Review Report

2009-2010

The Hunts Point School

Middle School 424

730 Bryant Avenue

Bronx

NY 10474

Principal: John Hughes

Dates of review: December 14 - 15, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Timothy Behr

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Hunts Point School is a middle school with 409 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 28% Black, 71% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 21% English language learners and 31% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 85.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The Hunts Point Middle School is an institution which values the student tremendously and believes that interaction and collaboration, whether between students or among staff, is key to attaining academic success. The principal is highly visible in the school. He has a vision that is understood by the school community. This extensive understanding of the school, its neighborhood and its students enable his goals to be realistic yet challenging. The administration and faculty use a wide variety of data to develop a clear understanding of performance and progress of students, which drives instruction and effective organizational adjustments. The school uses the Comprehensive Educational Plan to guide its work. The school leadership team assesses goals, interprets current data, and revises the action plan, if necessary, resulting in a shared decision making process to accelerate student learning.

The administration schedules organized opportunities during the school day for subject and grade teachers to meet to analyze formative and summative data, including student work to enhance instruction and student performance. The effective use of data to track student progress, particularly for English language learners, as they progress through the school informs curriculum planning and classroom instruction that aligns to state standards. Differentiation of instruction is a work in progress as student grouping, and rigorous activities that challenge students to use higher order thinking skills are not yet fully embedded practices.

There is an on-going need to modify goals and objectives in a timely manner to optimize the impact of decisions to enhance student outcomes. Collaborative teacher teams have prioritized distributed leadership by sharing best practices of analyzing data, curriculum planning, and classroom lessons. As a result, these teams develop model lesson plans which result in high levels of student involvement, as evidenced by their content area work products.

The school's association with community support organizations contributes to its ability to provide a high quality, well rounded education that promotes the academic, social, and emotional development of the students. The perception of the school held by the community in an extremely volatile area is also central to the vision. Student expectations are at the forefront. Students enjoy coming to school, feel safe, and are appreciative of their teachers and respond positively to opportunities provided for them. The community has stated that they appreciate the work the school is doing. The school is a beacon to the community and dedicated educators are making a difference in student's lives.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The calm, respectful, and nurturing school culture creates a safe and supportive environment for students' academic and social development.
 - The principal's effective use of the Learning Environment Survey is responsible for scheduling students to receive academic interventions before/after school and during lunch that influences their learning and lends to the good communication between the teachers, students, and parents.
 - The school's culture provides the opportunity for all students, including English language learners and special education students, to participate in a spectrum of rigorous academic classes. As a result, students benefit from smaller class sizes and additional support personnel. Teacher teams review test data to provide academic supports that promote learning and success.
- School leaders and faculty use a wide range of data to establish a clear understanding of the performance and progress of individuals and groups of students by grade.
 - The outstanding partnering of the statistician/technician with the teacher collaborative teams to analyze data leads to clear, concise student goals to promote the changes necessary to accelerate student performance and progress in English language arts and math.
 - The participation of the school leadership team in the development of goals and action plans leads to members feeling valued and partners in the process. This, partnered with the school leaders' analysis of students work products, teacher observations and walkthroughs, create a clear picture of the schools strengths and areas for improvement.
- The principal makes informed and effective organizational decisions to optimize teacher skill-sets and planning opportunities.
 - Inventive scheduling provides teachers the opportunity for common planning periods. These meetings enable teachers to have conversations about student work, student achievement, lesson planning, and common assessments to improve student's academic and social performance.
 - The Heart of Change Coaching Institute program empowers all teachers to improve their abilities to differentiate instruction leading to improving student learning outcomes.
- Teachers use data informed processes for planning and goal setting for grade levels and subject areas, and modify these as necessary based on identified needs.
 - The comprehensive use of State, periodic, and classroom level assessments to monitor student progress empowers teachers to adapt

the curriculum to meet the learning needs of students. For example, the precise analysis of a mock math test enables teachers to measure and track student's progress and to make curricular adjustments.

- Subject and classroom level goals are specific and created to provide changes in classroom instruction to enhance student learning. In math, students are reviewing basic multiplication and division skills to promote and accelerate learning. As a result, students are able to complete their math work with more accuracy, as evidenced by classroom performance and unit test scores.
- Professional collaboration on teacher teams using an inquiry approach is a high priority that results in shared leadership and improved student learning.
 - Teachers confidently and effectively use data and are provided with many opportunities to collaborate to design lesson plans, units of study and curriculum that positively impact on student learning outcomes.
 - Teacher-team models lead to the sharing of best practices across grade and subject areas and empower teachers to take leadership roles, such as team leader, to build capacity at the school instructional level. As a result, lesson plans address the needs of students and the analysis of student work is studied at the classroom and grade level.
- The school curriculum and extension activities create a wide range of opportunities for students to grow academically and, especially, socially.
 - Staff participated in a book study, "Discipline with Dignity", that aides the school to sustain a safe environment, as evidenced by the hallways being clear by the late bell. There is a very respectful culture, resulting in a reduction in student suspension rates. The Respect Opportunity, Commitment, and Knowledge (ROCK) reward program enables students to purchase items which promote self-esteem.
 - The school's partnerships, both internal and external, provide the opportunities to utilize a variety of skill-sets in order to better serve the needs of the students. For example, parents laud the after-school program because it, "Keeps our children off the street and safe. They are learning to get along with one another in a structured organized setting and learning rules."
- By interpreting data on a regular basis, the principal and faculty have a consistent understanding of the performance and progress of students by groups and subject, which informs instruction and organizational decisions.
 - At meetings with the administration and statistician, teachers are constantly made aware of the goals, learning outcomes and teaching points. The school's curriculum maps are consistently referenced. Teacher-teams plan their lessons from these maps and adjust whenever necessary. As a result, there is ongoing improvement of instruction to meet the needs of students.
 - The principal and faculty regularly use data, classroom observations, and teacher feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. The school schedules classroom inter-visitations based on individual teacher's needs

resulting in improved classroom instruction as evidenced by teachers implementing recommendations from observation reports.

What the school needs to improve

- Promote greater consistency in differentiated instruction based on data so that lesson planning reflects purposeful grouping, students being challenged, and questioning techniques that extend thinking to maximize learning.
 - Not all teachers consistently utilize data to create student groups based on performance or skill. As a result some classroom activities do not challenge students to use higher order thinking skills to maximize their learning potential.
 - Currently some classes do not provide multiple entry points to support student learning. Therefore teachers tend to group students less strategically and, as a result, student learning and application of skills is not maximized.
- Encourage active participation in citywide academic contests and expand student work displays to enhance the community's shared commitment to the school's high expectations and goals.
 - Only small pockets of student work are on display throughout the school. This lack of consistency in creating a print rich environment results in the school community not being able to promote and celebrate exemplary student work.
 - Currently the school does not participate in citywide sponsored academic and cultural activities. As a result, the students do not have the opportunity to enhance their curricular experiences and interpersonal skills.
- Implement a systematic school-wide practice where teachers regularly monitor and evaluate assessment systems with reference points throughout the year.
 - Develop protocols to provide a common lens to evaluate rigor, questioning techniques, and next steps for learning, with agreed benchmarks and checkpoints for monitoring and evaluating success.
 - Refine the analysis of student generated goal reflections throughout the school. Presently, teachers do not use a tracking tool to consistently identify those students making and not making progress over time.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: The Hunts Point School	Δ	▶	✓	+
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>	Δ	▶	✓	+
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>	Δ	▶	✓	+
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