

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

Health Opportunities High School

**High School 670
350 Gerard Avenue
Bronx
New York 10469**

Principal: Carron Staple

Dates of review: February 25 - March 1, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Kathleen Tuttle

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Health Opportunities is a high school with 617 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 36% Black, 62% Hispanic, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 28% of the students enrolled and girls account for 72%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 84%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Distributed leadership is one of the core beliefs of the principal of Health Opportunities High School. She has built a strong cabinet that believes in teacher and student empowerment. As a result of these efforts, teachers lead inquiry teams and professional development opportunities. In addition, students have a council through which they proactively share their voice. Parents are a strong component of the school's core belief system, and the good communication vehicles in place ensure clear expectations for both parents and students. This leads to a safe and positive school environment for learning. As a result, the school is transforming into a highly desirable educational choice for students in the Bronx.

The school routinely analyzes a variety of data sources to develop an updated picture of student achievement. Summative and formative assessments consistently inform budgetary and instructional decisions. Teacher teams are continually meeting and discussing student work and common assessments. While City and State accountability measures trigger school improvement efforts, the school does not probe deeply enough into the root causes of barriers to student achievement. This makes accelerating student achievement difficult.

Many teachers are embracing the use of learning styles and formative assessments in their lesson planning. Students are interested in their class work and report using rubrics to guide the quality of their work. While some teachers provide feedback on student work, clear next steps are not always given to direct the student's revision or enable parents can use to provide additional support. In addition, the feedback loop from administrators to teachers is inconsistent in providing specific next steps to meet the school goals.

The school has school-wide goals based on their data from Regents, scholarship reports, and periodic assessments. However, it does not have a written action plan delineating interim academic benchmark goals or a professional development plan. This negatively affects the establishment of coherent school-wide efforts and accurate assessment of ongoing capacity building. Teacher teams work with students to identify goals but the lack of structures to disaggregate data makes it difficult to identify common trends across subjects and sub-groups. Thus, key information for identifying students' needs and for assessing the effectiveness of classroom, curricular and organizational decisions is not always accessible.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's systems and partnerships support students and their families in continual learning and promote students' personal growth and development.
 - Using the philosophy "It takes a village to raise a child", all stakeholders and outside partners, such as Eastside House Settlement, College Bound, and College Now contribute to the mental model shared by students and their parents of attending higher education. In addition, a dedicated college counselor works with students and families through the college acceptance process, resulting in an over 90% college acceptance rate each year.
 - The principal and staff have worked diligently to improve the relationships with the other school in the building which has resulted in a safe and respectful climate. Workshops are arranged that include staff from both schools working together to understand the social emotional learning environment necessary for student success.
- The school has very good communication systems that maintain parents fully informed of school activities and their children's progress.
 - Parents keep well informed about their children's progress with progress reports, phone calls home, parent conferences, ARIS parent link and workshops designed to help parents support their children at home. Parents agree that the school consistently communicates positive news as well as areas of need, thus promoting positive relationships between the school and families.
 - Students and parents agree that the electronic grade book system helps students keep current in regards to their assignments and grades. Students report they are motivated to revise and submit their assignments because they see the result immediately, which has resulted in higher grades.
- The principal, using teacher input, makes effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school that support student achievement.
 - Students that rank in the middle are identified to be part of the AVID program, which helps students to organize themselves and prepare for higher education. Students in the first cohort, graduating this year, all agree the program was life changing. Consequently, 90% of these students are on the honor roll, taking advanced placement classes and have been accepted into college.
 - Advance placement classes are offered to prepare students for college. In addition, the school employs consultants to offer professional development to select math teachers, thereby supporting the school goal of improving the passing rate on the Geometry Regents.

- School leaders, faculty, the parent coordinator and other staff consistently communicate high expectations to students and families, and parents keep well informed of school programs that align with their children's needs.
 - The community provides highly structured internships to support the expectation that students will do 120 hours of community service. As a result, parents state that the internship experience is life altering for their children. Students observe that the school expectations are strictly enforced and the adults will do whatever it takes to keep students in school.
 - Parent involvement is growing through their increased active voice in School Leadership meetings and monthly parent meetings as well as the two-way communication through the parent coordinator. Parents provide ongoing input into the school goals as well as the action plan to realize the goals.
- Students demonstrate good behavior, high levels of engagement, and enthusiasm for learning in well-matched lessons, which enable them to reach their potential.
 - Differentiated instruction is a school-wide goal that is evident in many of the classrooms where students choose their assignment product based on their learning styles. Students in these classrooms are engaged in rigorous curriculum through the lens of essential questions for the unit.
 - The use of formative assessments to drive instruction is evidenced in many classrooms through the use of varied exit slips. Consequently, student grouping and instructional planning results from these assessments, as well as student conferencing, which takes place as teachers circulate throughout the classroom.
- Teacher teams use an inquiry approach to analyze student assessment data and student work, which results in adjustments to school programming and instructional practices to improve learning outcomes.
 - As a result of the learning on the school-wide math teacher team from the first semester, programming and curriculum were adjusted to give students a more comprehensive background in Algebra before entering Geometry.
 - Teachers learn new pedagogical skills in weekly focused meetings. Teachers collaborate and engage in relevant professional development regarding instructional objectives. Consequently, teachers have an increased understanding of the importance of differentiated instruction which has resulted in a greater focus on project-based learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine systems for measuring progress towards interim goals and benchmarks for all plans so that the principal and faculty modify goals and objectives in a timely manner.
 - The school uses an annual planning structure in Comprehensive Educational Plan goal setting. However, it has yet to formalize systems

to set measureable, long-term and interim goals consistently throughout the year and target effective instruction that meets the needs of all students.

- A collaborative system that analyzes the progress of teacher teams toward interim and long-term goals has not yet been established to evaluate the effectiveness of such teams throughout the year.
- Strengthen teachers' responses to all students' work to reflect guiding comments and level of performance to convey clear next learning steps so that students may accelerate their progress.
 - Some teachers provide students with rubrics and written feedback on their work. In addition, the feedback does not consistently provide next steps that enable students to have a clear idea of what revision steps should take place.
 - School leaders and teacher teams use Scantron, Acuity and Regents to track student progress. Presently, the information is not steadily used for revision of curriculum, goal-setting purposes or tracking trends by subgroup.
- Expand the use of the observation tool so that school-wide professional development plans are developed collaboratively with teachers and said plans align with school-wide instructional goals.
 - Teachers have personal and academic goals, but they are not measurable or linked to the school goals. While the school focus is on differentiated instruction, only a few of the teacher observations contained feedback on differentiated instruction.
 - Teachers have ongoing professional development based on their requests and results of summative assessments. Since there is no formal professional development plan, emerging needs take precedence over the school's goals, which weakens a strong instructional focus.
- Systematize the school's approach to effectively using data, extending the analysis to examine patterns and trends of all relevant subgroups, so that timely modifications to curriculum and instruction occur.
 - The school reviews a variety of information but does not have sufficient systems to make data easily accessible. Thus, limited understanding of longitudinal growth and trends interferes with timely intervention and adjustments to school decision making.
 - Some teacher teams are beginning to aggregate and organize their data as demonstrated by the Mathematics team comparison of the June and January regent's data. However, there is a lack of tools dedicated to aggregating and organizing data for reviewing student trends and performance in key subgroups for making curricular and instructional decisions.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Health Opportunities High School	△	▶	✓	+
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