



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability
2010-2011**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Elias Howe

Elementary School M051

**520 West 45th Street
Manhattan
NY 10036**

Principal: Nancy Sing Bock

Dates of review: February 14 - 15, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Deena Abu-Lughod

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Elias Howe is an elementary school with 343 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 12% Black, 56% Hispanic, 13% White, 17% Asian and 1% American Indian or Alaskan Native students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 95.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders continually evaluate the effectiveness of teaching to design professional development plans for teachers at all levels of practice.
 - An embedded system for improving teacher practice is guided by ongoing formal and informal observations and review of students' work samples and assessment results. Leaders provide precise action steps after frequent visits, and meet formally with teachers who reflect on their own practice and develop new professional goals based on their documented results with students. School wide professional literature study groups reinforce the common instructional focus.
 - Analysis of data results in highly differentiated professional development. Strategic deployment of coaches, consultants, and network specialists, and precise selection of external professional development opportunities raises the level of each teacher's effectiveness to prepare them for leadership positions within and beyond the school. Extensive coaching notes provide a running record of teacher progress, which underlies tenure decisions and future planning.
- Pedagogy emphasizes research-based learning strategies and differentiation to engage all learners at high levels.
 - The school's deeply held belief that students learn best by doing is manifested across classrooms. Experiential learning enables students to learn and use precise academic vocabulary in all content areas and to talk with great assurance and passion about what they have learned, how and why. Substantive projects that allow students to capitalize on their diverse learning styles and interest result in public celebrations of high quality research in social studies and science.
 - Across the school, purposeful mini-lessons with clear objectives are followed by guided practice, and independent and small-group work. Teachers develop a range of increasingly complex graphic organizers, sentence-frames, and prompts that scaffold each student's movement to the next level of achievement in literacy, and emphasize tiered tasks, mental computation, and multiple strategies that challenge students in math and result in high scores on exams.
- Resources are well aligned to maximize faculty capacity to learn from one another and collaborate to ensure each student receives tailored support.
 - Schedules foster collaboration and accountability between teacher teams, who meet three times a week on and across the grades to examine student work and plan instruction. A co-teaching arrangement for double-periods in science builds teacher capacity, reduces the teacher-student ratio, and allows students sufficient time to work on challenging applications of theoretical knowledge. As a result, almost half the students exceed the standards in this area.
 - Well-established relations with multiple universities enable the school to recruit talented student teachers and fill vacancies with the best to ensure seamless induction. Teacher assignments ensure complementary skills within each grade and class, while effective articulation with push-in English as a second language,

reading, and math specialists, guarantee that diverse student needs are effectively met within the classrooms.

- Rich curricula supported promote critical thinking as demonstrated in high quality student work products and performance.
 - A rigorous, well-implemented, standards-based curriculum exists for all subjects, including art and music that is adapted continually based on the needs of the students, thus providing for a high degree of coherence through the grades. The school works diligently to create and improve upon interdisciplinary projects, such as the Hudson River project, that make learning exciting and relevant for students who in turn have sustained high gains over several years. Well-planned lessons culminate in student demonstrations of mastery of the intended objectives through reflection and sharing of their best questions and conclusions.
- Inquiry successfully drives efforts to build teacher leadership and improve teaching and learning throughout the school.
 - Last year's investigation into how to improve writing amongst English language learners resulted in an expanded repertoire of checklists, templates, elaboration techniques, and parallel teaching strategies, that helped all targeted students pass the State assessment in this area. After sharing their best practices with staff for school wide implementation, the team is now testing its vertically aligned tasks and rubrics built on the new Common Core standard for opinion, with selected focus students who have already surpassed their initial goals.
 - Teachers, who respond eagerly to the invitation to identify themselves as leaders on the school's five teams, are highly valued for their insights. Administrators train them in facilitation skills, and expect them to share their research and successful strategies at regular intervals, resulting in a high sense of professional efficacy.
- The school uses very effective systems for gathering and analyzing all available sources of student data to identify needs for instructional and organizational planning.
 - Teachers synthesize multiple sources of reading, writing, and math data to identify trends, create differentiated goals, and select strategies for students who are grouped into three levels of performance. Analyses are conducted with greater frequency for the lowest third, and monthly for the most at risk, to revise goals. The cabinet reviews these documents quarterly with each teacher to monitor progress and match the findings with behavioral and attendance data from the academic intervention team. Consequently, targeted students can be programmed for suitable support, such as an additional hour of afterschool for English language learners as an additional learning opportunity to the customary 50 minutes. These documents and classroom visits also serve to identify evolving trends for timely adjustments. A recent sampling of student notebooks resulted in a school wide push to increase writing volume, and early monitoring evidences substantive increases.
- The school leadership cultivates a strong home-school partnership in academic, social, and artistic areas, resulting in a high level of parental involvement.

- Parents are true partners in the school's development, playing critical roles in 13 committees including the task force for the expansion to a new building, and spearheading the creation of the library and theater productions, which enable the school to realize its vision of providing students with artistic and socially-relevant learning experiences. Parents share the school's belief that these activities enhance student maturity, motivation, and self-esteem so they can meet the school's high expectations.
- The school creates multiple meaningful opportunities for parents to understand the school's curriculum. These include invitations to observe classes using protocols to record noticings and wonderings, followed by a debrief with instructional leaders, and workshops on rubrics and the new standards-based report cards that offer precise views of students' strengths and weaknesses. This has resulted in deeper understanding of how parents can collaborate with the school to promote their children's ownership of learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Specify and communicate interim goals and benchmarks so there is greater transparency across the school community about expectations for student growth.
 - The principal's vision of a high quality holistic education is embedded in the culture of the school. However, the school's annual goals relative to State tests are not sufficiently ambitious. Additionally, the school underutilizes existing tools such as Assessment Pro and the predictive assessments, to see whether it is on track to meet these goals. This hinders its capacity to check how its internal evaluations of progress align to the State's and identify where additional adjustments may be suitable. Long-range plans do not sufficiently include explicit achievement targets, which hinders the school's ability to sustain successful initiatives, such as the campaign for punctuality.
- Aggregate key progress indicators at the classroom, grade, and subgroup level to identify gaps and guarantee extension of the highest leverage practices.
 - The school has effective systems tracking individual mastery of math indicators, reading levels, and literal and inferential questions during the year. These systems are not designed to aggregate information so that the progress of different subgroups can be monitored and compared. Similarly, there is no system for aggregating this information in relation to specific achievement targets or for comparing outcomes from year to year. As a result, it is difficult to connect outcomes to specific practices or curricular modifications to select those that were more strategically important in closing the achievement gap.
- Extend teacher expertise in the use of itemized summative data to refine curricular planning.
 - Teachers are well versed in the use of running records and keep extensive conferencing notes, which they use to guide daily instructional planning. They have begun this year to scrutinize itemized results from interim and State assessments, which are used very well in math for planning strategy lessons. However, these results have not been used to the extent possible to embed needed skills more systematically when modifying the math or literacy curriculum.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Elias Howe	UD	D	P	WD
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, 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

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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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			
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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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			
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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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			
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed