

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Hugo Newman College Preparatory School

Elementary - Middle School 180

**370 West 120th Street
New York
NY 10027**

Principal: Dr. Peter L. McFarlane

Dates of review: March 8 – 9, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Sara Carvajal

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Hugo Newman College Preparatory is an elementary-middle school with 621 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 64% Black, 23% Hispanic, 6% White, 1% Asian, and 1% Native American. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 93.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well-developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The standards-driven curriculum offers a wide range of rigorous learning experiences and choice, including the arts, during and after-school, to facilitate students' ownership of learning.
 - In addition to immersing students with a vision for attending the college of their choice, the entire school community has adopted the need to shift from their former subject-silo model of instruction to a structure that embeds high quality expository writing across content areas with increased frequency. During a study of culture, second graders are challenged to experiment with chopsticks and forks, compare the functionality of each, and ultimately draft a persuasive essay that convincingly communicates student preference. As a result, the integrated curricula engage students in deep conversations that consistently prompt evaluation and creativity with specific subject content.
- The principal makes informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support improvements in learning.
 - Despite fiscal constraints, the principal maintains low class sizes across all grades, resulting in continued individualized attention for struggling students. Additionally, the principal's crafting of a rotating schedule for parent volunteers to oversee an ongoing open access to the school library allows this hub for research and literacy to remain highly functional and fully accessible to all students across the school.
 - A personnel committee comprised of tenured teachers, efficiently partners with the principal in thinking through the hiring and assignment process. The team, responsible for the initial review of resumes that arrive from local colleges, subsequently observe viable candidates teach live classes and rigorously assess the quality of instruction, using a rubric. Consultation meetings between the committee and administration then surface the strengths of particular candidates, thereby informing the principal's final decisions in hiring new personnel. As a result of this multi-step, collaborative process, teachers exercise superior expectations of newcomers and one another, holding each other accountable for high-quality pedagogy.
- Teachers work very effectively in collaborative teams to develop curriculum-aligned assessment tools, analyze student work, set teaching goals, and refine curriculum and instruction based on student outcomes.
 - The Exceptional Child Committee, (ECC), is the driving force that creates and revises all of the school's common pre- and post-assessments, and corresponding curricula, which inform differentiated instruction and goals' mastery across content areas in all classrooms. The team, comprised of representatives from all grades including classroom teachers and staff developers, use a well-paced, cyclical schedule, whereby core team members test their assessments, curricula, and strategies on the students they directly service. Consequently, the ECC turn keying of the assessments, curricula, and proven effective teaching strategies to their grade-specific colleagues is highly supportive of improving student achievement.

- The school consistently utilizes effective systems for monitoring teaching practice with a clear focus on improving instructional practices that align with a theory of action that is supported by all constituents.
 - All teachers across the grades benefit greatly from the high accessibility of their respective assistant principals, who steadily supplement their formal observations with informal classroom snapshots and feedback, individual consultations, and ongoing participation in teacher team discussions. The English language arts committee supports the analysis of student work across grades, carefully guiding grade-specific teams with a common rubric as a lens for discussion of what constitutes standard-bearing work. The principal's targeted strategy of regularly observing all probationary teachers complements the well-defined in-house mentoring structure. The sum of all these practices prompts teachers to increase the instructional intensity that is impacting learning, as evidenced by students' most recent predictive assessment outcomes.
- The principal has created a learning community that is well focused on student outcomes with a vision to sustain accelerated adult and student learning.
 - Building considerably on its past work with differentiated instruction, the entire school community now reviews "student readiness, learning styles and interests" to develop strategic goals and initiatives at the school-wide, grade and individual student levels. As a result, the school observes a steady improvement in the content of student writing across subject areas and a sustained low level of student infractions.
 - Parents greatly appreciate the consistent opportunity to participate on subject-specific sub-committees that investigate the impact of the school's work through pre- and post-assessments, including the appropriateness of tasks and their relevance to differentiated instruction. Consequently, parents feel well equipped to communicate the school's mission and current initiatives with the school community at-large.
- All teachers welcome opportunities to proactively participate in highly autonomous collaborative inquiry as the primary means by which to strengthen instruction and raise learning outcomes for all students.
 - Teachers across grades and subject areas whole-heartedly buy in to the school's collective belief that well-planned, differentiated instruction is the key to increased student achievement outcomes for all students. Therefore, the ECC owns this year's school-wide focus of evaluating the relationship between pre- and post- assessments and differentiated instruction. This core team continually offers administration strategic input on how to best push the achievement agenda, including the selection of a mentor text, which guides research-based dialogue around the role of assessment. As a result, the teacher-driven initiative continues fermenting into a multi-layered structure during weekly grade meetings, content area committee meetings, and school leadership team meetings. Additionally, the ongoing refinement of pivotal instructional practices and curricula are prompting steady student progress.
- The school's instructional leaders use a wide range of data to evaluate regularly the effectiveness of teacher teamwork and professional development supports, making adjustments as necessary.

- In addition to checking in with assistant principals weekly to gauge the quality and progress of teacher practice and grade-specific teacher teams, the principal engages each individual teacher in discussions regarding their individual Building Level Action Plans. The principal meets with teachers at the onset of the school year to delineate their professional goals and action plans in alignment with the observed achievement needs of students they service. The principal subsequently engages teachers in two follow-up conversations, using interim data, to gauge how their individual pedagogy and involvement in teacher teamwork has shifted over time and its impact on the progress of students.

What the school needs to improve

- Streamline the present data systems for collecting and monitoring data relative to the progress of student achievement in order to optimize the use of all available information in collaborative inquiry.
 - The school consistently collects and analyzes a balance of attendance and academic student data on homeroom data sheets and supplemental subgroup distribution tables to monitor student progress throughout the school year. However, at this time, the instructional leadership team is beginning discussions about tailoring a data tool that embraces these two manually-maintained data streams so that improvements occur in the school-wide communication of progress with students, families, and teachers. Consequently, teacher teams do not yet access one centralized tool that readily highlights real-time classroom data and Acuity outcomes for the school's lowest one-third of achievers and students with individualized educational plans, so that concrete subgroup trends are addressed concurrently with the holistic concerns that surface during inquiry work sessions.
- Deepen differentiation of instruction so that lessons engage all students and offer suitable challenge at their respective readiness levels.
 - The vast majority of teachers consistently differentiate instruction, using small group venues and task choice that suit the learning readiness and interests of the lower-achieving students. However, the school does not yet demonstrate embedded practice in demanding more of the higher achieving students with extension activities that stretch their thinking. As a result, the higher echelon of students in some classes is graciously compliant, but unchallenged.
- Expand on the use of external partnerships and community links to support teachers with professional development that offers strategies, which facilitate students' focus and personal growth.
 - Students regularly benefit from a rich array of extracurricular supports, including several well-embedded sports and arts partnerships, which provide highly organized social opportunities for students during and after the regular school day. Additionally, all current programs exercise the strategic thinking and reasoning of participating students through team competition and performance. However, at this time, the school does not yet have embedded partnerships that offer regularly scheduled professional development to targeted staff in the areas of social and emotional support to students. As a result, a few teachers demonstrate limited strategies in managing the behavior of the more challenging middle school students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Hugo Newman College Preparatory	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