

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**Hudson Cliffs**

**Elementary/Middle School M187**

**349 Cabrini Blvd.  
Manhattan  
NY 10040**

**Principal: Cynthia Chory**

**Dates of review: March 1-2, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Martha Madera**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Hudson Cliffs is an elementary/middle school with 784 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 2% Black, 62% Hispanic, 31% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 3% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 95%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Strategic organizational decisions regarding the use of resources support the schools goals in order to improve student outcome.
  - Two part-time literacy coaches and one math consultant support teachers with the implementation of instruction. They facilitate common planning to review and make needed instructional and curriculum changes. Teachers participate in lab sites where they observe instructional strategies to further improve classroom instruction that accelerate student learning.
  - The principal, in collaboration with School Leadership Team established a committee to explore homogenous grouping. Consequently, the workshop model was implemented and teachers are supported to deliver differentiated instruction for multi level ability groupings. As a result, all students are challenged to develop higher order thinking skills.
- The school maintains a safe and orderly environment that is conducive to student and adult learning.
  - A variety of data including attendance and incident reports are analyzed to determine areas of need to enhance the school's environment. During Respect for All week, students participated in lessons to explore the impact of bullying, stereotyping and discrimination, contributing to students' personal growth and the school's safe environment.
  - The school provides an array of opportunities for students to participate in programs that support their social emotional learning. One example is the partnership with Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility which trains staff to support students in becoming peer mediators. As a result, both students and staff are skilled in conflict resolution, contributing to a respectful school culture that fosters academic excellence.
- The school has established a coherent vision of future development that drives efforts to accelerate student learning.
  - Well defined school goals are outlined in the school's Comprehensive Education Plan that are specifically linked to accelerating student performance. School Leadership Team meetings, faculty conferences and parent association meetings are venues the school uses to share updates and generate support for the school's vision.
  - School level planning incorporates the voices of staff and families, thus generating broad support for the school's direction. Staff and parents work together to develop a long range plan that supports heterogeneous grouping and differentiated instruction across the grades, in order to ensure multilevel classrooms where student support each other's learning
- The school gathers and analyzes a range of data in order to identify trends, and create a clear portrait of the school's strengths and areas of needs.

- The school uses a range of data including attendance, discipline, referral and teacher observations to supplement summative assessments in order to develop goals, action plans and track the progress of students across grades. As a result of this focused work students are prepared to be college ready, resulting in high acceptance to specialized high schools.
- A comprehensive item analysis informed this year's school-wide goal setting, resulting in curricular and instructional revisions. Teachers have an overall picture of their students' strength and deficiencies and as such utilize strategies and materials to meet individual student's needs. Students needing additional support attend after school programs to receive tailored instruction in order to ensure their academic success.
- Professional development opportunities are aligned with the school's instructional goals in order to improve student learning outcomes.
  - Using a matrix of differentiated professional development, teachers are supported to implement the school's instructional plan. Staff attended Common Core Standards training and as a result, curriculum maps are aligned to the new standards. In addition, as part of the formative assessment math pilot, teachers attend monthly training that supports them in developing assessments tailored to their students' learning needs.
  - The school's extended cabinet includes coaches and teachers whom collaboratively plan to develop the capacity of staff. Consequently, teacher teams have designed rubrics for literacy and math through the lens of the Common Core State Standards. Rubrics are used to evaluate student work and to plan strategic lessons that improve student learning.
- The school integrates support services with outside partners in order to enhance and accelerate the academic and personal growth of students.
  - In collaboration with several partnerships the school is provides a multitude of services for students and families. A school based mental health program addresses referrals to support at-risk students. In addition, staff receives training in order to provide after school group counseling using the school's "Exploring Me" curriculum. Students are provided with opportunities to explore topics dealing with anger, bullying and friendship building. Students are also exposed to real world learning experiences that foster leadership skills, further contributing to their academic and personal growth.

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

- Enhance tasks that emphasize higher order skills to include questioning that extends thinking to maximize student learning.
  - The school has aligned its curriculum to State standards including a focus on college readiness tasks and teachers are working diligently to refine lessons in order to include questioning that extend student thinking. However, evidence during classroom visits indicate that further support is

needed to embed higher order thinking skills across all content areas so that all students are continuously engaged in higher level learning.

- Academic tasks are planned to challenge a diversity of learners. This is evident in collaborative team teaching classes where students with different abilities display equal levels of student engagement. However, lessons do not always engage students to develop analytical and evaluative thought processes. Consequently, students are not challenged to utilize these skills to increase their academic performance.
- Ensure that lessons are suitably differentiated across the content areas to challenge and meet the needs of all subgroups of students.
  - The school's instructional framework incorporates differentiated instruction; however, discussions during teacher team meetings do not focus on developing differentiated strategies that can be shared across grades and content areas, thus limiting opportunity for teachers to maximize their learning and that of their students.
  - Across classrooms teaching strategies and routines are typically differentiated. Evidence of student work shows high levels of engagement and thinking in literacy, social studies, and science. However, this is not the practice in math where students are taught in a whole group followed by "round robin" activities that are not designed to extend learning opportunities, thereby limiting impact on their progress.
- Expand processes to critically analyze information on student learning in order to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels.
  - Teacher teams regularly analyze assessments to ensure that they are aligned to key standards and review results to assess the effectiveness of instruction and impact on student learning. However, an analysis of student work products is not yet conducted. As a result, a clear portrait of students' mastery is not established, to determine next learning steps.
  - While teachers supplement formative assessments by examining Periodic Assessments data, there are few examples of teachers designing common assessments that capture specific information about students' understanding, thereby hindering opportunities for students to achieve their highest performance levels.
- Create greater coherence in the collection of data in order to facilitate the analysis of student performance trends for making school level decisions.
  - The school's data spreadsheets monitor student progress and capture trends across the grades. However, current data tools do not facilitate the analysis of trends by subgroup. As a result, the school cannot readily determine achievements and next steps for targeted students.
  - Although teacher teams analyze and aggregate performance trends they do not use a detailed analysis of data to determine students' strengths and needs across grades. This inhibits the school's decision-making in order to set broad instructional priorities for key subgroups of students at the school level.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

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

**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**

<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
-----------	-----------------------	----------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	-----------	-----------------------