

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**The Samuel Huntington School**

**Elementary School 040  
109-20 Union Hall Street  
Jamaica, N.Y. 11433**

**Principal: Alison Branker**

**Dates of review: January 26 & 28, 2011  
Lead Reviewer: Beverly Ffolkes-Bryant Ed.D**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Samuel Huntington School is an elementary school with 544 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 6. The school population comprises 73% Black, 18% Hispanic, 2% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 91.6%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is Proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Relationships across the school are warm, supportive, and inclusive of students, teachers, and parents, who feel valued and take pride in being part of the school community, resulting in greater personal and academic development.
  - The school's guidance team, consisting of the psychologist, social workers and the Save our School Against Violence in Education, (SAVE), teacher effectively analyze SAVE data which is used to develop suitable presentations on social/emotional topics. Grade-level lunchtime assemblies reinforce the positive student behavior found in the school.
  - Students enthusiastically state that adults in the school know them by their first name and encourage them to go to college. A school safety officer on every floor, and classroom doors that are kept open so classroom teachers can "catch roaming students", was spoken about as reinforcing a feeling of safety and enabling students to focus on academics and meeting goals.
- The school administration makes informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school that support improvements in learning.
  - The principal has allocated classroom space for every out-of-classroom teacher as well as the after school programs and school residencies thus providing a calm environment where students benefit from optimum instruction utilizing maximum resources and tools.
  - After analyzing the results from the standardized tests, and realizing that this year's grade 5 students were the lowest performing, the principal strategically scheduled cluster teachers to push-in one period a week to work with small groups of targeted students. This enables the lowest performers to receive specific targeted academic intervention, which sequentially helps with achievement.
- Expectations for delivering the standards-based curriculum are clear and supported by pacing guides and instructional calendars that include progress-monitoring checkpoints in order to facilitate students' ownership of learning.
  - The school's development of grade-level curriculum maps in each core subject are aligned to State standards and distributed monthly to all members of the school community, including parents. Committees of teachers review, individual teachers plan subject specific lessons, and the principal reviews the work, to ensure alignment with the standards. Therefore, the entire community knows what is being taught and the connection to the standards.
  - During 'Lunch and Learn' sessions, teacher teams access ARIS to look at item-skills analyses and identify grade-level trends of classroom level performance in order to focus on specific standards to help close the achievement gap. As a result, staff have created power standards for English language arts and math that are on display in every classroom and provide clear expectations, resulting in focused instruction to support student mastery and close the achievement gap.

- The school's development of differentiated learning gives students the opportunity to undertake research and solve problems that create learners that are more active.
  - Students are grouped based on either of three criteria: skill (from school wide assessment data to find strengths and weaknesses), choice (in regards to their independent activities), or learning styles (based on the Renzulli learning assessment). This results in targeted instruction to students based on multiple entry points that increases student engagement.
  - Inquiry team members are required to provide three short-term goals for targeted students based on the school-wide focus. Teachers review student work to determine mastery and when appropriate collaboratively adjust the goals, which reinforces staff's commitment to continuous planning to improve student learning.
- Through regular use of a wide range of relevant data, leaders and staff have an ongoing understanding of the performance and progress of individuals, by group, and subject, which informs instruction and organizational adjustments.
  - The school's unit assessment test in each of the core curriculum areas, administered in six-week cycles, enables teachers to analyzed relevant data and group students. Assessment results are regularly reviewed to revise goals, and allows for close monitoring of student progress.
  - During 'Lunch and Learn' sessions, grade 3-6 classroom teachers analyze results of their classes' English language arts data from periodic assessments. As a result, they are able to recognize key elements of students' performance, develop suitable pedagogy including the development of questions to support students' learning needs, and group students by need. Additionally, teachers revise a computer-based learning program to include relevant skills to maximize targeted instruction.
- The school has established very effective systems for self-evaluation, review, and modification of practice with a clear focus on improving student learning.
  - Administration and cabinet review six-week unit assessment tests, and the literacy coach provides feedback to teachers, in order to determine next steps for grouping. The SAVE teacher reviews weekly attendance of students in the testing grades, and makes home visits to those with poor attendance to find out the reason. Administration reviews the inquiry teams' conference binders during their walkthroughs to make sure that teacher teams are following inquiry protocols. The student behavior log is analyzed by the guidance team to determine present impact and need for further student interventions. These systems result in clear guidelines for academic growth, which has resulted in improved student outcomes.

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

- Provide consistent feedback to parents regarding student goals with detailed reasons of their success and clear next steps for improvement based on specific rubrics in order to help them set and achieve their goals.
  - The school progress report, distributed monthly in between report card distribution, informs parents of their children's progress. However, it does not sufficiently inform parents of strategies to help their children at home in order for further their achievement and have a clear sense of good next steps.

- The school does not yet sufficiently provide parents with adequate training or knowledge around ARIS Parent Link. Parents stated that they only used ARIS once in the school's computer lab during parent teacher conferences, but not when the school has other parent gatherings, such as monthly workshops and spirit days. This creates limited opportunities for parents to effectively learn how and to use key instructional tools to support their children's improvement.
- Strengthen school communication to convey high expectations to students and parents thereby impacting positively on student achievement.
  - The school does not yet translate the student progress report into all languages represented in the school. As a result, there is a population of parents who are not sufficiently informed and unable to help their children at home.
  - Although the school has a dedicated bulletin board space for parents, listing yearlong workshops and curriculum themes, parents could not articulate specific ways in which they are provided opportunities for involvement and leadership. As a result, parents are not yet fully involved in school decision making.
- Design a uniform protocol for walkthroughs and observations to provide a common lens that evaluates teaching practice and identifies next steps.
  - Although the principal stated that the school's instructional focus was to improve proficiency in English language arts and math, the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan does not clearly reflect this. Teachers, when asked at a teacher team meeting, could not articulate the instructional focus. As a result, the school does not yet have evidence of a coherent focus among key contingencies related to instructional practice.
  - The school's informal walkthrough system includes a different focus every other week that is shared in the staff calendar. However, the focus is not aligned with the school's curriculum focus for the week, or is feedback aligned to individual teacher's professional needs. Additionally, formal observations do not highlight teacher's needs, thereby missing opportunities to differentiate support.
- Extend data gathering and analysis practices to all core subjects in order to provide a complete picture of students' progress across all aspects of the school.
  - The school analyzes a plethora of data from their multiple school wide assessments and end-of-unit assessments. However, there was no evidence of rigor in this analysis, nor in using the periodic assessments for identifying trends in progress and performance of relevant subgroups of students. Consequently, the school is not developing a clear picture of targeting students for academic intervention.
  - Classrooms have a data wall containing recent results in English language arts, math, science, and social studies. The literacy coach provides analysis of data and written feedback to the classroom teacher on strengths, weaknesses, and next steps. However, this feedback is not given to all core subject area teachers resulting in inconsistencies in sharing of information, which impedes student achievement across all content areas.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: Samuel Huntington</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 <b>Gather</b> 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>		

<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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>				
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?		<b>X</b>					
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?		<b>X</b>					
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<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>