

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**Lorraine Hansberry**

**Elementary School Q118**

**109-20 109<sup>th</sup> Road  
Queens  
NY 11412**

**Principal: Cynthia Ofori Feaster**

**Dates of review: January 10 – 11, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Lenon Murray**

## **Part 1: The school context**

### **Information about the school**

The Lorraine Hansberry School is an elementary school with 679 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 88% Black, 9% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 10% 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 93.0%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Across classrooms teaching strategies are leading to a solid level of student engagement that produces quality student work products and processes resulting in student improvement.
  - Students are involved in the lessons and indicate when asked that they are eager to learn. Students ask questions of their teachers and readily engage in discussion when given the opportunity to do so. Students do an enormous amount of writing in their notebooks across major subject areas. The written responses to teacher assignments provide evidence of improved engagement since the start of the school year.
  - Teachers have a generally good grasp of student data and can articulate coherent reasons for their flexible and skill-based groupings. Teachers fill in the gaps in the curricula outlines by maintaining continuity through familiarity with their scope and sequence. Teachers make intentional efforts to differentiate for their students mainly through providing different tiers in student work assignments. Students' current work is compared with their previous work individually to chart incremental improvement.
- Individual teachers and teacher teams use and create assessments that are aligned to State standards and provide feedback on the effectiveness of instructional decisions to facilitate student growth.
  - Teacher grade level teams work independently to develop, find and use assessments that are aligned with their curricular frameworks and State standards. Teachers use data to make the decisions that help them immediately adjust their instruction for any struggling students. This has led to systematic re-teaching after most mini-lessons to small groups of students.
  - Teachers depend heavily on their daily classroom level student work and projects to supplement the Periodic Assessment information. The third grade team looks at student work on their own and the fifth grade teachers develop common projects and shared rubrics to support students' learning. These teachers identify students that are below grade level, on grade level or above grade level to facilitate early intervention with identified students by providing targeted support.
- The school has developed goals and action plans that support its efforts to increase student learning and social-emotional development.
  - The school has a short list of clear and comprehensive goals that are consistent across the comprehensive education plan, the school self-evaluation and the principal's performance goals. These goals are used as an expression of the school vision for student performance. The various constituencies of the school are aware of the goals which address curriculum, academic rigor, development of the whole child, inter-disciplinary teaching, and writing that leads to focused effort.

- The school leaders and faculty contribute to the needs assessment process through their surveys, school leadership team meeting analyses, consultation meetings and parent meetings. This has enabled the school to identify its weaknesses in social studies and science, and develop ways to increase academic rigor.
- School leaders use formal and informal observations, teacher teaming, mentoring and coaching to support teaching and increase professional growth.
  - The majority of the teachers are working together on their grades and taking responsibility for teaching all the major subject areas including a new emphasis on social studies and science. The literacy block incorporates lessons on grammar and legible handwriting.
  - The school leaders regularly observe teachers formally and informally while providing feedback based on student data and the work the students have produced. Teachers are aware of their strengths and areas of need and they compare their student's progress to strengthen their teaching. As a result, teachers modify their practice to better meet student needs.
- Teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach to impact student performance.
  - The majority of teachers meet weekly on grade-level teams to discuss curriculum, assessments and instructional strategies. Teachers take ownership of this collaboration, where they focus on target students in their classrooms who are struggling to improve their performance. This practice serves as a means to align classroom work to student learning goals established at the start of each unit.
  - As teacher teams analyze their student assessment data and student work consistently, they provide support to each other in utilizing scarce resources such as classroom library books and texts, and in developing effective instructional approaches including finding research-based practices on the internet. These practices, which include guided reading, building background knowledge, accountable talk and individualized conferences with students, have resulted in measurable progress for struggling students.

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

- Develop alignment between the school's instructional goals and its utilization of resources to better support the academic needs of students.
  - The school has three coaches to support the implementation of its curriculum initiatives. However, several teachers state and it is evident in classrooms that there is a severe shortage of materials and supplies across subject areas and grade levels leading to inadequate and outdated texts and workbooks. The utilization of the coaches' time is inconsistent with the needs of the teachers, as the coaches act primarily as administrative assistants. This has resulted in the privatization of instruction and a general lack of academic rigor for students.

- Increase the clarity and rigor of the school's curricula and academic tasks to improve the achievement of a diversity of learners.
  - The school leaders attempt to align curricula with State standards by developing curriculum outlines and connecting them to pacing calendars. The literacy curriculum remains unclear and is inconsistently related to specific literacy skills that students need. Some classrooms are indicative of higher order thinking skills which are stimulated by effective questioning. However, rigorous habits are not evident across classrooms and that leads to minimal improvement in literacy growth.
- Refine the consistency of data gathering and analysis to provide an effective feedback system that evaluates the impact of school level decisions.
  - School leaders place primary responsibility on teachers for gathering and analyzing Periodic Assessment and classroom-level data on student subgroups, which is an inconsistent practice at the school. School leaders and faculty inconsistently gather and analyze any type of data that provides actionable feedback with regard to school level decisions such as changing the curriculum, hiring coaches, eliminating PTA facilities in the school and modifying the content of cluster positions. This has limited the effectiveness of school level organizational decisions.
- Communicate higher expectations and more challenging goals to students and families and include them in decision-making to increase student academic growth.
  - School leaders and faculty use letters, notices, phone calls and at times e-mail to communicate with parents. They share expectations for students to attend school regularly and maintain positive standards of behavior. However, academic standards are not explained and the curriculum is unclear, leading to parents' inability to sufficiently help their child achieve.
  - The school sends information to parents about parent association meetings, school leadership team meetings and parent workshops. Some parents feel that the school does not exhibit a welcoming atmosphere, which has resulted in minimal parental involvement in school decision making opportunities.
- Establish structures that evaluate how effectively teacher teams are engaging in structured professional collaborations and leadership development strategies that improve student performance.
  - Teacher teams meet regularly to work on assessments, curriculum and refining instructional strategies. Occasionally coaches will sit in on these meetings but little guidance is provided from school leaders. As a result, fewer students attain higher levels of success, impeding the acceleration of learning.
  - Newer teachers have conversations with coaches on the expectations and requirements of school leadership. Distributed leadership is not yet embedded in all collaborations, limiting the levels of success for all teams.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: Lorraine Hansberry</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>		

<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>