

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Eugenio Maria De Hostos

Middle School 318

**101 Walton Street
Brooklyn
NY 11206**

Principal: Fortunato Rubino

Dates of review: November 7-10, 2011

Lead Reviewer: James Quail

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Eugenio Maria De Hostos is a middle school with 1682 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 14% Black, 64% Hispanic, 14% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 95.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school exhibits a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment in which all students feel their active participation influences school decisions and promotes learning and achievement. (1.4)
 - The vast majority of staff, parents, and students express a high regard for the school's inclusive and safe environment as evidenced by a consistently high attendance at over 95% and low suspension rates. The recent Learning Environment Survey (LES) reflects extremely high levels of satisfaction by all parties noting that safety, learning, and engagement matters. The school's development of a meaningful action plan addresses improving communication, as cited in the LES, by instituting a technology based daily reporting system on grades, homework and behavior. Thus, this enhancement furthers the positive atmosphere, fostering the personal and academic growth of students and adults to increase learning.
 - Classroom visits provide strong evidence of students carefully following rules and protocols while actively participating in all learning activities. Students praise their teachers and school leaders for giving them opportunities to influence school decisions around course offerings and sports programs, now; the school has a basketball and baseball team. Students mention they receive added support from their teachers before, after school, and even during lunch periods. One student said, "My teachers care about me and help me when I need assistance." This helps to foster active student engagement and promotes the production of meaningful work.
- The school offers a rich and varied curriculum, during and after school, emphasizing key State standards and tasks to engage students in learning and close the achievement gap. (1.1)
 - The principal actively engages members of the school community, including school leadership team constituents, to revise curriculum maps, units of study, grade, and subject rubrics to include key State standards and new Common Core learning tasks. Teachers and school leaders carefully work on the development of a persuasive essay, as an agreed upon literacy task across grades and subjects, using a variety of non-fictional sources. A strategic use of benchmark papers, common assessments, and grade specific rubrics, measure student progress. These collaborative decisions help align the curricula to promote rigorous work to enable students to be engaged with relevant, suitably matched tasks to raise student achievement.
 - This school offers a vast array of enrichment, rigorous course requirements, and intervention courses before, during, and after school. Computers, guitar, chess, drama, stock market, journalism, botany, homework help, student government, literacy, and math, meets the needs of all students, including special education and English language learners. The marching band, representative of all students, receives

requests to perform at many events, and the school recently won the national chess championship. Each summer, the offering of an enriched program for English language learners and at-risk students provides additional support. Consequently, the vast majority of students pass Regents' exams, with many scoring well above the minimum passing scores.

- The school's comprehensive and effective organizational decisions support instructional goals that enhance learning and improve student work. (1.3)
 - The school's purchase of additional reading books for students addresses its goal to improve reading comprehension with a focus on including non-fictional materials to address the goal of meeting rigorous Common Core standards. Student progress, tracked through reading charts and journals, provides continuous evidence to note the meeting of student needs to increase learning.
 - Teachers and teams of teachers use a vast variety of data, including authentic student work to place students in courses over short cycles of time, thus addressing student needs. The creation of smaller sized classes for at risk, special education and English language learners, enables these learners to receive the individualized support of teacher specialists and increases opportunities to produce meaningful work.
- The school strategically uses data, including observations, to monitor teaching to improve instruction and promote teacher development. (4.1)
 - School leaders meaningfully engage teachers in the development of a plan and purpose of observations, making expectations clear. The school collaboratively uses a framework for teaching focused on the use of questioning techniques, classroom environment, and the use of data to meet student needs. Observations that reflect a connection between school goals and teacher performance with precise next steps in the learning process supports differentiated teacher directed support. New teachers receive ten hours of professional development centered on effective practices for at risk students, including English language learners. Teachers share how they purposefully use data to inform their instruction and planning resulting in a move to improve teacher practice, enrich instruction, and increase student and adult learning.
- Across classrooms, differentiated practices and instruction aligned to the curriculum effectively engage students in producing meaningful work. (1.2)
 - Classroom observations show teachers purposefully using a wide range of summative and formative data to inform their instruction. There is a clear focus on modeling by the teacher, clear teaching points, rubrics in all subjects, vocabulary development, and a variety of questions that promote student thinking. These practices align to school beliefs about how students learn, moving from the literal to the figurative and increasing opportunities for students to be more actively engaged in learning and challenging students to produce meaningful work.
 - A vast variety of questions promote student thinking. A teacher's use of short video clips on capital punishment followed by key questions

engaged students in a lively and thoughtful discussion. At risk readers are asked purposeful questions using picture clues to stimulate active student discussion related to vocabulary words and definitions. Most classroom teachers utilize a SMARTboard to illustrate teaching points and highlight key ideas or understandings in each lesson, resulting in student engagement and increased opportunities to produce meaningful work.

- Individual teachers and teams purposefully use a wide range of data and assessments to adjust instruction, and identify student needs to improve student outcomes. (2.2)
 - Individual teachers and teams strategic use of summative and formative data, rubrics, and student work, informs planning and grouping of students, that change based on student progress, needs, and interests. As a result, teachers are now focusing on vocabulary development, comprehension skills, persuasive writing across grades and subjects, and the use of key questions to engage students in deeper thinking and understanding.
 - Teachers across the school use daily homework assignments, lesson exit slips, notebooks, common rubrics, and grade and class lessons to monitor and assess student needs and progress. This supports teachers in using timely instructional information to make adjustments to meet student needs and increase learning. Students speak highly of the fact they receive extra daily support from their teachers during lunch periods or before school.

What the school needs to improve

- Enrich the use of teacher feedback on student work to support students and families in having a clear understanding of progress and next steps to increase learning. (2.4)
 - Parents speak highly of Jupiter Grades, the new technology system that informs them on a daily basis how their children perform on homework, behavior, and assessments. The school sends home timely progress reports in all subjects. However, some but not all teachers make specific comments on student work with next learning steps. This restricts building home-school partnerships to increase learning by sharing with families and student clear next steps in the learning process.
- Refine the use of data by teachers and teams to set annual and interim goals for groups of students that leverage change in professional practices to increase student outcomes. (3.2)
 - The school has acted purposefully in setting a goal based on a recommendation from its last Quality Review around more rigorous instruction. Teachers and teams use a great deal of meaningful data to set goals for students and subgroups, however the practice of setting annual and interim goals is not consistent across the school. The inquiry team studying the progress of subgroups of strugglers, including English language learners, keeps their focus on meeting specific student needs

but does not set annual goals for these students. This limits efforts to set learning targets to ensure each student reaches his or her potential.

- Some teachers and teams use data and student work to leverage changes in their practices, such as providing at risk and special education students with individual vocabulary sheets to help with reading comprehension, or working with pairing of English language learners highlighting selected reading materials to scaffold their learning. However, these efforts to change teacher practice focused on student learning goals are not yet evident across all classrooms. Thus, there is inconsistency in meeting precise student needs and accelerating student-learning school wide.
- Expand professional learning opportunities for staff to build capacity to improve professional practices aligned with meeting school goals to improve learning outcomes. (4.3)
 - The school's purposeful professional development plan assists teachers in meeting key goals around questioning, comprehension and the new tasks in literacy and math. Individual teachers, and during weekly team meetings, staff study student work, and use guidelines to measure progress. However, currently, staff members do not feel there is adequate time dedicated to these efforts and their professional growth. This diminishes opportunities for regular discussion of practices and sharpening of instructional knowledge to extend learning improvements across the school and raise student outcomes.
- Enhance systems and the use of data to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams, collaborations, and capacity building to accelerate learning across the school. (5.4)
 - Teacher teams analyze data and student work to adjust their instruction and build coherence around learning. In addition, the school strategically measures the growth of teachers using short cycles of observations. However, as school leaders mentioned, they are refining their systems to share and study these efforts over short periods. Consequently, there are limitations around the acceleration of professional growth and sharing of timely information to further boost instructional practice and student learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Eugenio Maria De Hostos	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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?			X	
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?			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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			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, guidance/advisement 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, with particular attention to the CCLS?			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