

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**Manhattan Hunter Science High School**

**M541**

**122 Amsterdam Avenue  
Manhattan  
NY 10023**

**Principal: Susan Kreisman**

**Dates of review: October 17-18, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Jill Herman**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Manhattan / Hunter Science High School is a High school with 455 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 21% Black, 40% Hispanic, 26% Asian students and 12% white students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 95.5%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school and faculty maintain strong collaborative relationships with families as key stake holders that enable them to understand their child's needs as well as support the needs of the school as a whole. (2.4)
  - A strong parents association and School Leadership Team review school data and have input on school decision making. This year, parents in collaboration with school leaders examined SAT scores and influenced a school wide change in advisory for upper grades of instituting college prep and SAT review. Parents and school leaders are working on updating the school website. Parents survey families and design workshops to better understand adolescents as well as the school's expectations, resulting in increased parental support for all students achieving strong academic success.
  - In response to parent communication needs, as reflected by the Learning Environment Survey and conversations, an on-line grading system was put in place so that parents can check daily how their children are doing in their classes. A fall curriculum meeting provides families with passwords and refresher courses in ARIS and other tools. In addition, parents have teachers' emails and engage in reciprocal discussion about their child's performance, resulting in informed parental support for achievement. Parents state that they get prompt responses to their emails and teachers are available for individual meetings.
- A short list of agreed upon goals, based on data, impact instructional decisions and leverage change, resulting in accelerated student learning. (3.1)
  - The yearly and interim goals are aligned to strengthen and support the mission and vision of creating a school where students graduate college ready, do not need remedial courses, and persist in college. According to CUNY Report, the amount of remediation has lessened from 21% in writing to 2%, 17% to 4% in mathematics from 2009 to 2010. In addition college persistence ranges from 5% to 10% higher for graduates of this school compared to the citywide average.
  - Parents openly discuss college readiness dispositions. Teachers have identified writing and using evidence as a focus and it is apparent in the classrooms, assignments and student discussions. Students are able to articulate their target learning goals: what they need to learn to be successful in their classes, and where they are in terms of mastery in ways that make the learning transparent so that they can better understand where they are, where they need to be, and what they need to get there, which results in taking responsibility for their learning and improving their content and process skills.
- High expectations are communicated and supported in ways that provide opportunity for all students to achieve high levels of academic success. (3.4)

- The vast majority of students take at least one year of college credit courses in their senior year. The department team meetings focus on both content and dispositions to ensure that all students' learning will be accelerated in order to attend these courses. All teachers have contributed to 'college readiness' charts, meet regularly with their partner, Hunter College, and clearly articulate the mission of the school. The frequency of their meetings, formal and informal, demonstrates a shared accountability that greatly supports student academic growth.
- A strong pupil personnel team works seamlessly with teachers, students and families. Their focus is ensuring that all students are successful; including high needs students and families. They communicate daily with teachers; implement plans for students including highly personalized scheduling, in order to ensure that both academic and social-emotional needs are met. Students state that they are college bound, that teachers provide any additional support they need such as clarification in classrooms, after school and lunch and learn. Attendance is 95%. In addition, some 11<sup>th</sup> graders take some college level courses. Highly individualized attention, coordinated by this team, and supported by teachers provides a setting where all students can achieve the goals set by the school.
- Curriculum, aligned to both state and school's college ready standards, emphasize rigorous habits that prepare students for post-secondary success. (1.1)
  - Standards based curricula integrates art into the content areas. Teachers design scope and sequence that include carefully selected concepts and skills, ranging from thesis development and providing evidence to forming study groups, as well as beginning to include CCLS tasks, to accelerate learning, and hold students to high levels of achievement.
  - Higher order thinking skills and rigorous habits that include foci on thesis development and evidence are embedded into classroom lessons. Students are engaged in their work, respond to thoughtfully developed open ended questions and revise their work, demonstrating a coherent understanding of learning.
- Organizational decisions are strategic and aligned to support the school's goals of improving instruction for all students. (1.3)
  - Teams of teachers meet in a variety of ways. Once a week full staff looks at student work to identify gaps in writing. Schedules are designed so that departments meet once a week to support curriculum alignment and improve pedagogical delivery to address the gaps; grade teams meet once a month with pupil personnel and teacher leader team comprised of different content areas to support teachers in CCLS. In addition, monthly high school/Hunter college meetings held after school, discuss strengths and areas of need as students transition to college courses so that school can adjust and improve instruction to ensure all students are successful in college courses.
  - Departments, with input from leadership, decide on teacher assignments with the goal of creating well balanced grade teams. Student

programming is personalized and designed so that all students have the opportunity for individual conferencing, after school, and learning at lunch with their own teachers, resulting in added supports that meet students learning needs.

- Classroom assessments, including rubrics aligned to curriculum, are used by teachers to inform and strengthen their practice. (2.2)
  - Teachers have created a common assessment and rubric for writing in all content areas. They analyze student work, discuss their findings, adjust and plan curricular and classroom strategies in order to improve instruction so that all students will achieve at high levels. Classroom teachers' questioning pushes students to provide evidence with their statements, strengthening students' oral responses, to mesh with and support their written responses.
  - Based on summative data, careful and targeted assessments were designed for social study classes, improving the 2011 Global and US History Regents results. The Chemistry teacher uses a weekly on-line system to immediately inform him where individual and/or groups of students are performing at high levels or struggling in order to adjust his planning to meet the needs of learners in his classroom.

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

- Ensure curricula and academic tasks are sufficiently differentiated in order to meet the needs of all learners within the classroom. (1.2)
  - The reading materials and assignments are the same for all students in all classes. Some strategies for grouping and collaborative work are present but do not consistently lead to high levels of student thinking. After school or lunch time assistance are the primary remedies for mastery, resulting in minimized opportunities for targeted interventions during class instructional time that would ensure increased outcomes for both struggling and high achieving students.
- Utilize a research-based common framework to evaluate and support teachers that will enhance professional growth and reflection. (4.1)
  - The school has adapted a research based framework for observations, and is currently in the process of training staff on its implementation. Although teacher leaders are planning to use this tool to conduct visitations during their free time, the framework has not been fully embedded in the school regarding targets and frequency of observations. This minimizes school's ability to clearly coordinate teacher feedback with student outcomes, hinders strategic planning and hampers the development of a staff development system that drives coherence of teaching and learning outcomes.
- Expand repertoire of collaborative teams to incorporate additional use of protocols that would deepen teachers' practice and understanding of students' learning. (4.2)

- Although groups of teachers consistently examine student work and distributive leadership structures are in place, the process is conducted without a system that includes teacher assignments and protocols to identify and focus areas for improvement in pedagogy. In the absence of such protocols, systemic sharing of both practice and understanding of students' needs is hampered, hindering teams' ability to leverage their work to maximize achievement and instruction and make more informed decisions regarding both content and delivery.
- Formalize the system of evaluating teams of teachers to strengthen the impact of their work. (5.4)

There are no formal guidelines that inform team expectations and help evaluate the effectiveness of teams. Consultancy exists on an individual basis but not embedded across teams. Leadership development opportunities are evaluated but the systems used for evaluation do not focus on leveraging decision making to develop teacher leaders. The lack of formalized systems for defining team expectations and evaluating problem solving strategies in the context of collaborative inquiry result in missed opportunities for ample adult learning and teacher leader development.

**Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012**

<b>School name: Manhattan Hunter Science High School</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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			<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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?				<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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?				<b>X</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.**

<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, 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?			<b>X</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.**

<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, with particular attention to the CCLS?			<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>