

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Horace Greeley School

Intermediate School 010

**45-11 31st Avenue
Long Island City
NY 11103**

Principal: Clemente Lopes

Dates of review: October 25 - 26, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Dr. Philip A. Composto

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Horace Greely School is a Junior High - Intermediate Middle school with 949 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 6% Black, 50% Hispanic, 18% White, and 26% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 93.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Students and their families greatly appreciate the school's focused efforts in creating a safe and respectful environment that promotes learning and supports their needs. (1.4)
 - The Learning Environment survey indicates that 98% of parents, students and teachers feel the school maintains a safe and orderly environment for learning. Students mention that they can talk to their principal, assistant principals, teachers, counselor and other adults if they have a problem. One student said, "My teacher cares if I learn." The school maintains over a 94% rate of attendance and has drastically reduced suspensions. Visits to each classroom show students eager to improve their efforts and work. As a result, the school maintains a sharp focus on the academic and personal development of students and adults.
- The school engages students and families in school decision making activities and regularly communicates information regarding student performance resulting in strong buy in and support for success. (2.4)
 - The school provides all families and students with ongoing information about their strengths and areas for improvement on student progress towards mastering the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Teachers send home student interim progress reports including attendance and social emotional growth, data where applicable and parents feel that they have timely access to teachers on a regular basis, enabled by the principal and faculty's open door policy to address all parental questions and concerns. Thus, parents are well informed on students' progress and needs along with next steps, in order to support clear and high expectations for their child's learning.
 - To increase communication with parents about student outcomes, the school offers continuous assistance with the Achievement Reporting and Innovation System software (ARIS) Parent Link. In addition, the school has an interactive website, a user friendly tool that informs parents, students and staff of all upcoming events, news, policies, forums and other issues related to the school. The website translates its contents in various languages, as needed, so that all parents are able to use this tool. Thus, these efforts support the school in sharing clear expectations about student learning and progress, allow parents to utilize tools to access and understand their child's performance, resulting in a positive home and school relationship that promotes learning.
- The school's internal capacity and strong partnerships with a variety of organizations help support students' personal and academic development, resulting in accelerated learning.(4.4)
 - The school works with the Relationship Abuse Prevention Program (RAPP). RAPP is a New York City violence intervention and prevention program which provides individual and group counseling for students

experiencing various issues. They offer workshops for bullying, sexual harassment, assertive communication styles and setting healthy boundaries and building safe and healthy relationships. This strategic partnership amplifies school's internal capacity to meet student needs. Consequently, students enjoy coming to school, engage in real life learning experiences and feel as an integral part of the learning community.

- To ensure a positive and safe school culture, an assistant principal is assigned to monitor behavior, track incidents and code infractions, and address areas of need. The assistant principal coordinates work done by deans, guidance and school safety agents in order to provide preventive counseling and academic support to identified students. This has led to a decline in occurrences from 311 in 2010 to 157 in 2011 and an improvement on student achievement on periodic assessments.
- The school conveys high expectations that promote parent involvement and support learning so that school, students and families work toward meeting the school's goals. (3.4)
 - Parents value the school's effort in communicating consistent expectations for students' academic, attendance and personal success. Students and families participate in meetings that provide important information regarding promotion, high school selection and special courses to help students get into Specialized High Schools. For example, the school held a meeting for grade seven parents and students who want to start early to research the right high school and to learn the admission process. As a result, students and parents understand their roles and responsibilities in getting into their choice high school. Consequently, many students signed up for the Specialized High School courses.
- School leaders make informed and purposeful organizational decisions that improve instruction, and meet students' need, resulting in increased achievement. (1.3)
 - The school uses its resources effectively to improve the learning outcomes of all students. For example, high needs students are placed in "Direct Instruction", a program that targets specific literary skills and matched to teachers with strong intervention skills. Upon being identified, students receive targeted instruction by those teachers four times per week. Students from all grades are bridged, and once enough progress is made, they transition into the next group. These effective organizational structures and appropriate use of resources are well aligned to the school's goals and lead to improved learning outcomes as evidenced by increased achievement on end of unit assessments and reading benchmarks.
 - The school schedule enables teams of teachers to meet regularly to share best practices and improve instruction for identified student subgroups. For example, the teacher team focusing on boys' and girls' subgroups identified resources such as technology, hands-on learning activities and high interest literature for boys. As a result of the implemented modifications, teachers report that boys are more engaged

in gender classes and their academic performance has improved as noted in quarterly assessments and by student work products.

- Leaders use a wide range of data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of organizational decisions, resulting in effective adjustments that yield improvements in teaching and learning. (5.4)
 - The school uses “School Binders”, a computer software that uses the Danielson framework to provide feedback to teachers in terms of their instruction. By using “School Binders”, the administration is able to identify trends in instruction and make explicit connections to teacher needs for future professional development, teacher assignments and provide immediate feedback to teachers and teacher teams. It also serves as a system tool for school leaders by aligning the observation piece, maximizing the connections among supervisors and evaluating leadership development opportunities thus supporting teacher leadership that result in effective teaching and learning practices.

What the school needs to improve

- Establish rigorous habits and higher order skills across all subjects and grades so that all students are meaningfully engaged and challenged in learning. (1.1)
 - School leaders and teachers regularly revise curriculum and instructional practice to emphasize key standards and integrate the Common Core Standards (CCS). However, there is minimal evidence of curriculum alignment across grades and subject areas, resulting in the inconsistent implementation of a challenging and engaging curriculum across the school, hindering performance particularly for subgroups.
- Refine teaching practices to promote greater consistency in strategically differentiating instruction so that lessons challenge students in their learning and result in meaningful work products from all students. (1.2)
 - Although teachers in most classes plan lessons aligned with school’s core belief of flexible grouping to improve student learning and use appropriate scaffolds to differentiate instruction in response to students’ performance trends and identified needs and interests, teaching strategies are not informed by and revised based on the team feedback and discussion. Furthermore, strategic differentiation is not a consistent practice across all subjects and grades. As a result, lessons do not always challenge all students at their level, particularly high performers, to their full potential and instruction does not always fully address their learning needs.
- Strengthen the use of formative assessments that are closely aligned to key standards and linked to the curriculum for student subgroups. (2.2)
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers use ELA and math item analysis information as well as Acuity predictive and interim assessment data to supplement summative data and identify student performance levels. However, they do not consistently incorporate the use of ongoing formative assessment data into their daily practice to make immediate

adjustments to lessons. This limits the school's ability to pinpoint and address the special needs of student subgroups and modify targeted, differentiated interventions to accelerate learning. As a result, instructional strategies and learning tasks are not always strategically revised, hindering opportunities to meet the needs of all students.

- Enhance the use of classroom observations along with the analysis of student work data to improve professional development and student achievement. (4.1)
 - School leaders offer recommendations for teachers to improve their instructional practice through formal observations and analysis of student work products using a common instructional lens. The school has adopted Danielson's research-based rubric to articulate clear expectations for teacher practices and use that framework for development of teachers. However, school leaders have not yet fully engaged in consistent practice of short, frequent cycles of classroom visits to provide clear next steps to improve instruction. This limits their ability to identify teachers' specific areas for improvement to strengthen their teaching craft and positively impact student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Horace Greeley School	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