

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Horace Mann
Elementary School 090

86-50 109 STREET
QUEENS
NY 11418

Principal: ADRIENNE UBERTINI

Dates of review: May 22 - 23, 2012
Lead Reviewer: Jacqueline Gonzalez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Horace Mann is an Elementary school with 867 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 10% Black, 57% Hispanic, 4% White, 29% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 93.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Across grades and classrooms, teachers engage students in higher order learning experiences, providing necessary supports and extensions that support progress and achievement for diverse learners. (1.2)
 - o Lessons in math and reading include teacher modeling, higher order questions, and rigor in tasks that require students to lead discussions and strategize solutions to problems with their peers, leading to student ownership of learning. Administration and staff alike frequently engage in discussions at weekly meetings around the concept of gradually releasing responsibility to their students and this guides instructional planning that ensures more student participation. In a second grade classroom, students facilitate the literature study circle and when they tend to rely on the teacher, she reminds them that it is their "job" to ask the questions and lead the discussion. These same skills are observed at higher levels as third grade students engage in book talks. As a result, there is increased student engagement and participation in the learning process as reflected in discussions and student work.
 - o Opportunities for diverse learners to access content at appropriate levels are evident in differentiated tasks as well as direct teacher support during conferences with students. Teachers develop and implement "Differentiated Instruction Action Plans" based on formal and informal data relative to students' mastery of skills and standards. During the guided reading portion of a lesson, students are assessed in targeted skill areas and teachers ask higher order questions that push students to articulate their learning. Other students work on independent reading activities, web-based reading, and math programs that allow for structured student choice based on mastery of standards-based skills. For English language learners, and for students with disabilities, (SWD's), teachers scaffold new vocabulary and concept development providing schema-building and strong entry points for all learners across content areas. Consequently, there is increased and improved student work as evidenced in student writing, higher-level discussions, and students' ability to articulate their learning.
- Teacher teams consistently use uniform standards-based rubrics and assessments and effectively analyze student work leading to improved instructional decisions and learning for students. (2.2)
 - o During weekly team meetings, teachers analyze summative and interim student progress data to help in the identification of grade level and content area strengths, and areas for further instruction. A protocol for looking at student work is formalized and used consistently across teams. Teachers are detailed in their analysis of student work products and provide feedback to each other on particular strategies that support or extend student learning, frequently referring to research-based strategies from professional books, which they study together. Students' work is assessed using uniform, teacher developed, content and task specific rubrics to determine what a student does well, what a student needs to learn, and the implications for planning, preparation, and instructional adjustments. As a result, a determined strategy around teacher modeling has had an impact on the improvement of student writing. Teachers also state that the alignment of assessments to standards has resulted in more rigorous

planning and instruction, leading to increased student learning as seen in higher-level student work products.

- School leaders and faculty effectively use data from focused observations of instruction resulting in informed professional development and elevated pedagogical practices across the school. (4.1)
 - o The use of the Danielson framework for assessment of teaching practices, specifically in the six competencies outlined in the Citywide expectations, has led to a shared understanding of the elements of pedagogy leading to effective school wide learning environments. Teachers and supervisors engage in professional development and short frequent observations (SFO's) that result in timely and actionable feedback to teachers about their practice, including next steps needed for improving the teaching and learning environment. The shared definitions about effective practice, frequent dialogue with supervisors and the resulting support provided by intervisitation and goals-based professional development, has created a collaborative culture at the school. Teachers state that they use the feedback to guide their own learning and growth and appreciate feedback that is associated with a timeline relative to the implementation of suggestions. This focused process has elevated practice, around the use of higher order questions, improved discussion techniques by teachers across grades, and has specifically helped teachers see the link between their practice and student performance and progress.
- Across teams, teachers use various data sources to set well-differentiated learning goals for students that inform instructional decisions and accelerate student learning. (3.2)
 - o As part of a formalized collaborative team structure, teachers analyze data from Developmental Reading Assessment, Early Performance Assessment in Language Arts, Dibels, end-of-unit tests, Acuity, Ed Performance Series, and simulations, to help them identify the needs and strengths of individual students, by class, grade, and for specific subgroups. Staff then set learning goals for students to ensure working effectively towards identified standards to enhance learning for all students. Teachers develop a 'Differentiated Instructional Action Plan' which focuses on students' targeted areas of need and informs small groups, interventions, extended learning opportunities, and resources, thus ensuring that all students are working towards mastery of stated standards .
- The school's warm and inclusive culture provides a collaborative, positive learning environment where students and staff feel supported and promotes both professional and academic success. (1.4)
 - o The use of the book, "Have You Filled a Bucket Today?", a guide to daily happiness for kids, referenced as a text to guide the school's core values of caring and appreciation for one another, has resulted in an environment where staff, students, and community members, encourage and support each other by placing a "drop in a bucket" to acknowledge success in how students behave and demonstrate academic progress and teachers contribute to the community. Students say the school is like a family and teachers care about them. They also believe it is important to meet the high expectations set for them by the new standards since, "Teachers believe they will go to college and have good jobs/careers in the future and that is why they push them to work hard." Teachers speak with a sense of responsibility about their students and value the collaborative and professional environment of the school as supportive to their

own learning. This culture of safety, support, and high standards, has resulted in an improved teaching and learning environment.

- School leaders organize student performance and interim progress data in ways that inform needed adjustments in practice, resources, and organizational decisions. (2.1)
 - o The organization and analysis of summative data by grade, class, and subgroup, around reading and math especially, has provided a portrait of the school which captures areas for improvement and areas of strength. Data from the prior year's Developmental Reading Assessments indicated that there was an overall need for further instruction in developing students' ability to recall facts. Adjustments in planning aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards has moved teacher practice to address this need as all students are asked to provide evidence from text when responding in any content area and providing rationale for their responses. Additional analysis of subgroup reading and writing data for English language learners informed an organizational decision to place the English as a Second Language teacher in the lower grades to further develop student skills.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand the alignment of curriculum to the Common Core Learning Standards across all subjects to include rigorous tasks and assessments to ensure cognitive engagement for all learners including highest and lowest achieving students. (1.1)
 - o Staff work collaboratively to analyze and revise curriculum and align it to the CCLS. Using Common Core Curriculum Maps funded by Bill and Melinda Gates, teachers have worked extensively around the alignment of units of study, assessments, texts, resources, and instructional planning to ensure that students are engaged in rigorous learning and discussion in English language arts. Key standards include providing evidence for literary response both in discussion and in writing. Similarly, in math, the alignment of Everyday Math units to the CCLS has begun and is influencing the strategic sequencing of units of study on each grade. Although there is an emphasis in all subjects to engage all students, including ELL's and students with disabilities, in higher order thinking and tasks, the curricula for science, social studies and the arts are not yet fully aligned or reflective of the level of analysis and implementation in ELA. Thus, this prevents similar high-level opportunities across all content areas.
- Further align organizational decisions and the use of resources to the school's instructional goals in order to support student achievement and progress across content areas. (1.3)
 - o The administration has made good use of teacher team meeting time as evidenced by the level of commitment to the use of the time for analyzing data and working towards school goals. The use of professional development funds to further support planning time and curriculum development for teachers has resulted in a strong English language arts instructional program. Additionally, the use of push-in and pull-out, ESL and academic intervention services strategically supports many students while in content area classrooms. Although, there is evidence that teachers are using similar effective strategies in other subjects, there are fewer opportunities for professional development and collaboration in math, science, and social studies, limiting the enhancement of pedagogical and content knowledge and hindering the acceleration of student learning in these areas.

- Increase opportunities for students to engage in activities during the day or after school that promote social/emotional development and real world learning experiences. (4.4)
 - o A variety of strategies support student non-academic development as part of the Respect for All initiative. Teachers have participated in staff development that enables them to create a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment. The school wide reading of the text, "Have You Filled a Bucket Today?" has also led to opportunities for students to develop social/emotional skills as they interact positively with peers and adults. In lessons, where the texts are relevant to the topic, teachers engage students in conversations that promote discussion about experiences and decision-making reflective of situations they may face beyond school and in their future. However, the school does not yet include partnerships and opportunities for the majority of students to engage in non-academic and real world learning experiences thus hindering the acceleration of personal and academic growth of students.
- Refine the system for measuring progress towards interim goals to inform timely improvements and adjustments to curriculum and instruction. (5.3)
 - o The current planning process at the school includes both short-term goals of increasing student achievement and progress in reading and math, and long-term goals captured in the Comprehensive Educational Plan and school level documents, improving pedagogical practice, increasing rigor in all content areas and developing a standards-aligned curriculum. Teachers are demonstrating their growth as evidenced by classroom lessons and feedback on their observation reports. The current structure also includes opportunities for teachers to analyze individual student/class progress within units of study and in specific skill areas. However, there is less clarity around monitoring grade and subgroup progress towards meeting interim goals and targeted skill areas, thus limiting the leadership's ability to ensure strategic adjustments to accelerate learning and progress by all students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Horace Mann	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	
1..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
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