

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

MOTT HALL COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Middle School 467

**650 HOLLYWOOD AVENUE
BRONX
NY 10465**

Principal: GEOVANTI STEWARD

Dates of review: November 22-23, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Timothy Behr

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

MOTT HALL COMMUNITY SCHOOL is a middle school with 166 students from grade 6 through grade 7. The school population comprises 20% Black, 60% Hispanic, 17% White, 2% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 58% of the students enrolled and girls account for 42%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 91.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and faculty work as a united team to establish a calm, respectful, and orderly climate for learning to take place. (1.4)
 - o Parents state that the principal regularly addresses student conduct difficulties through direct contact with families. This personalized approach encourages and motivates student's positive social and academic behavior. Students state they like that they can turn to their principal to resolve personal and academic concerns. Consequently, the schools environment and culture have improved as evidenced by fewer principal suspensions. As a result, everyone is able to place more emphasis on academic achievement.
 - o Every scholar is known well by at least one adult who assists with the coordination of social, emotional, and academic support. The principal acknowledges students by name and is aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Action plans for scholars are developed during collaboration team meetings, which are shared with families. As a result, students feel that school experiences are rewarding and enjoyable as evidenced by student attendance, which continually remains above the 90% plateau.
- The schools extra curricular activities create a wide range of opportunities for students to grow academically, socially, and emotionally. (4.4)
 - o The principal and teachers provide advisement for students and parents in dealing with the numerous issues of choosing a high school and planning for college by administrating a college and career inventory. As a result, the school is addressing the students' social and academic needs by enabling the families to effectively begin planning their children's academic choices and opportunities.
 - o The principal's acknowledgement of the need to enhance and extend student-learning experiences led to establishing a variety of academic, social, and sports clubs to expand classroom-learning experiences. Consequently, this has resulted in improved academic performance as evidenced by teacher made tests and fewer in house suspensions. The flag football team won the championship!
- The school is expanding its tools to track student progress towards achieving learning objectives at the school and class level. (3.3)
 - o The school uses formal and informal assessments to inform teaching and monitor student outcomes. Teachers continually revise their instructional practice based on these data points and communicate the outcomes of assessments and next steps with families. Therefore, students know what they need to continue to strengthen as learners, and parents are becoming aware of which content areas they can support at home.
- The school is working to refine their systems for ongoing review and adaptations of curriculum and instruction to drive student achievement. (5.1)
 - o The school's curriculum is aligned to State standards and the principal has begun aligning the school wide focus of reading and writing tasks to the Common Core Learning Standards, (CCLS), in all content areas. This initiative has produced positive results in student performance as evidenced by report card grades.

- o Through the effective use of team collaborations the principal encourages evaluation of curricula and instructional systems to meet the needs of all students. This analysis has resulted in the implementation of project-based learning in all core content areas to improve student performance.
- Parents and students are engaged in regular open exchanges of information regarding social and academic outcomes in order to accelerate learning. (2.4)
 - o Parents participate in the school's annual food drive, Halloween dance, and many choose to have a voice in the roll out of a course designed to improve students' public speaking skills. In addition, parent involvement supported the decision to add a modern dance instructor to enhance student experiences at the school. As a result, the school's involving parents allows them to assist with their children's academic success, promotes social/emotional activities, and furthers parent support as evidenced by positive responses on the Learning Environment Survey.
 - o The school-home connection is supported through parent workshops relating to ARIS Parent Link, high school articulation, and the integration of CCLS tasks in English language arts and math. These sessions enable families to keep track of their children's academic performance, to work with the school to identify next learning steps, and are supportive of planning for their children's future.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine curricula in order to prioritize rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills for all subject areas and grades, with a keen eye towards students with disabilities and English language learners. (1.1)
 - o Teacher teams analyze data for groups of students and use this information to prioritize content area strands aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. However, rigorous tasks are inconsistent in classrooms throughout the school especially for students with disabilities and English language learners. This limits their ability to make exemplary gains in performance on the State English language arts and math tests as evidenced by the 2010-2011 Progress Report.
- Ensure consistency in differentiating instruction, based on data analysis, in order for lesson planning to reflect purposeful grouping, differentiated tasks, and targeted questioning to promote student achievement. (1.2)
 - o Most lessons were teacher directed and involved whole group instruction. Targeted assistance to students within small groups based upon skill specific assessment data is not yet a consistent practice. Consequently, teachers are not generally providing effective targeted instruction. Therefore, not all students are performing at grade level in English language arts as evidenced by the 2010-2011 Progress Report.
 - o Most teachers present generic lessons, and students exhibit uneven levels of involvement especially during reading and writing, and questioning in most classes was low-level. Teachers did not consistently ask supplementary or higher order questions to determine student understanding of the content presented. As a result, most students including those with disabilities and English language learners are not being provided with well-matched lessons to meet their individual needs as evidenced by student work products.

- Develop and refine systems in order for the principal to make informed and effective organizational decisions throughout the school that supports improvement in student outcomes. (1.3)
 - o The math team meets two times per week to review data and student work samples. However, teachers are not consistently using this information to guide classroom instruction. Consequently, instruction is not regularly meeting the needs of students as evidenced by a lack of authentic student work samples that include suitable tasks.
 - o Currently, the school only has an absent teacher reserve assistant principal responsible for supervising special education, and administrative support is not yet in place to facilitate analysis of school data. Additionally, the principal is not sufficiently in classrooms to consistently monitor and utilize data to inform decisions to support school-wide initiatives. Although teachers meet in collaborative teams, they do not regularly have an administrator to help them use data and review student work to guide instructional planning. As a result, teachers are not suitably addressing student needs in all classes, especially English language arts where the majority of students are below the proficiency level.
- Expand the interpretation and use of assessments to develop coherence of instructional practices in order for all students to make progress. (2.2)
 - o Teacher teams meet regularly to review quantitative and qualitative data, rubrics, and when appropriate anecdotal information that is generally aligned with the school's key standards of reading informational text and citing evidence to support opinions. However, teachers are not consistently planning data-informed structured lessons for closing the achievement gap of students. Furthermore, the majority of teachers are not using data sources, including rubrics, to obtain an accurate profile of student's next steps. As a result, relevant subgroups are not performing at grade level or attaining 75th growth percentile in English language arts and math as evidenced by the 2010-2011 Progress Report.
- Develop a system to empower all teachers to know their students' needs strengths, achievements, and individual learning preferences across content areas on a regular basis to support targeted instruction. (4.1)
 - o Each of the 13 teachers new to the school this year has had informal observations with feedback to improve their craft. Data meetings provide opportunities for new teachers to review student achievement. Additionally, the network provides professional development support and in-house inter-visitations assistance to identify best practices. A research-based rubric that is beginning to be used and reviewed regularly articulates clear expectations for teacher practice. However, although most classes incorporate modeling that is referenced in observation reports, there are times during small group work that teachers do not adequately reinforce the learning objective by providing students with additional demonstration examples. Consequently, some teachers are not sufficiently knowledgeable when or how to reinforce learning targets during lessons. As a result, students are not able to complete activities and teachers are not honing their craft to improve the delivery of instruction.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: MOTT HALL COMMUNITY 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
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