

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**Mott Hall IV Middle School**

**Middle School K522**

**1137 Herkimer Street**

**Brooklyn**

**NY 11233**

**Principal: Dr. Thomas McBryde**

**Dates of review: January 24 – 25, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Ainslie Cumberbatch**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Mott Hall IV is a middle school with 219 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 89% Black, 10% Hispanic and less than 1% other students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 93.6%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school aligns curricula to State standards and includes opportunities for students to engage in a variety of challenging learning experiences across classrooms that support increased learning outcomes. (1.1)
  - Each teacher team receives weekly classroom level support from consultants in math and literacy to integrate the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) into their planning and instruction, including the creation of detailed curriculum maps and performance tasks aligned to standards in all subject areas. For each unit, teachers have developed rubrics, created pre and post assessments and collected benchmark assignments. They have begun to analyze student work at team meetings to identify next steps as well as a wide range of instructional strategies and approaches to enhance teacher practice. Across classrooms, writing journals provide evidence of purposeful work focused on non-fiction writing. For example, one seventh grade CCLS literacy task focused on students synthesizing information they extracted from a class text, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, so students could support their opinions with evidence. As a result, students benefit from purposeful tasks that develop skills and knowledge for a diversity of learners to prepare students for high school and beyond.
- The principal has strategically aligned resources to develop teacher practice and provide enhanced opportunities for student engagement that promotes academic achievement. (1.3)
  - The principal strategically uses resources to support learning priorities, including the integration of technology across classrooms. Ipad, laptops, kindles, SMARTboards and digital cameras are available to students during all lessons to support their learning. These tools have been used to aid students in their writing and research. The school has also adopted a reading intervention program called *Accelerated Reader*. This academic support has led to an increase in independent reading stamina and an overall gain of one to three reading levels by 63% of the middle school students since October of this school year. As such, resources are well aligned to school-wide instructional goals and are effectively distributed and leveraged to support teacher practice and student learning.
  - Teacher teams meet on a regular basis, at least twice a week. During this time, they are supported by consultants in math and English language arts to help create and revise academic tasks. Teachers were observed during team meetings analyzing student work from CCLS tasks to identify areas of strength and weakness for individual students as well as sharing resources, such as math strategies, to help advance instructional goals. As a result, most students demonstrate growth in assessments on challenging academic tasks as noted in student progress data.

- Teachers use common assessments and rubrics across grades and subject areas to determine and meet the needs of students. (2.2)
  - Teachers use a common curriculum and common assessments to track mastery from a grade and subject perspective. They use rubrics to assess student work and provide feedback. Performance data captured on tracking sheets identify target groups of students who are deeply struggling with particular skills in their own classrooms. Teachers bring student work samples to team meetings to identify common trends within subject areas. Analysis of common assessments in math revealed that seventh grade students struggled with multi-step problems. This led the math teacher to incorporate manipulatives into her lessons and access a website for math resources to push conceptual understanding, as well as incorporate the practice of asking students to justify their mathematical thinking. As a result of constant student self-reflection, the level of rigor of math tasks and entry points for students are increasing and student work in math portfolios shows student growth.
  
- School leaders and faculty have high expectations for students and communicate effectively with parents so that there are multiple opportunities for families to be active partners toward improving student outcomes. (3.4)
  - The principal is very strong in articulating high expectations for all members of the school staff. This is done through regular faculty conferences, principal communications, individual and team conversations and discussions. Professional development for all members of the faculty including administrators, teachers and support staff, continually raises the bar for the level of work expected by adults and students at the school. Teachers receive comprehensive support in building pedagogical skills around questioning, designing coherent instruction and assessments. This serves to expand teacher capacity in offering high level, engaging instruction that motivates students and sets the highest expectations. A review of teacher self-assessments, notes from team meetings, unit and lesson plans, feedback on observation reports and student work products all demonstrate that the culture of the school promotes a belief that all students can learn with appropriate supports. As a result, the school is a strong professional community that strives to elevate its practice by regular reflection and uses student outcomes to better understand the effectiveness of instruction and address specific needs so that students meet their learning goals.
  - School leaders, teachers, students and families create a true partnership to hold every student to high standards and ensure that each has a clear path toward achieving positive outcomes. Parents report that they feel valued, challenged, connected, and informed about what is occurring at Mott Hall IV. Students participate in creating learning goals that align to individual needs. An online system is used to share progress reports issued every four and a half weeks with families. It provides current information about student performance that facilitates ongoing dialogue with teachers about student progress. School staff utilize language that promotes college readiness skills such as, “colleges expect” and “in college we...” when speaking to students, detailing what it requires to be prepared for college and providing yearly trips for students and families to colleges and universities. Rigorous classroom assignments in most classes coupled with the use of rubrics and valuable feedback is reflective

of the high expectations set by the school. Teachers utilize the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model, along with higher-order questioning during instruction to challenge students to think and analyze information critically. In addition, all grade 8 students are enrolled in accelerated courses preparing them for the algebra and Living Environment Regents exams. As a result of the school's high expectations, students are motivated to attend school on a regular basis as reflected in a year to date attendance of over 94%. In addition, during interviews students stated, "Teachers push you to do more, even if your work is scored at level 3".

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

- Increase school capacity to develop pedagogical practice that promotes high levels of student thinking and work products across all classrooms in order to support college and career readiness skills. (1.2)
  - The school believes that students learn best when differentiation drives the ongoing use of formative and summative assessments. Teachers utilize various data sources including running records, conferencing notes, questioning, class participation and observation feedback to form flexible learning groups, based on reading and skill level. Group work is targeted and questioning in most classrooms leads to critical thinking and student participation in discussions, which guide students to produce high-level work products. However, not every student demonstrates active participation in their own learning during cooperative learning groups and across inquiry-based classroom experiences, thus hindering the ability of some students to reach their full potential as they prepare for college and careers.
- Refine school systems for evaluating decision-making processes to increase consistency of policies and practices that accelerate student learning. (5.1)
  - School staff meet regularly to review instructional practices and assessment results. Teachers use the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) matrix to allow students to track where they are on this rubric and in their own performance. They also use exemplars and anchor papers to isolate needed skills to complete performance tasks so that students have models of what is needed to attain proficiency on tasks. However, despite the school's alignment of resources such as the use of consultants, teacher time to examine the results of students' performance tasks and the integration of instructional technology, gaps in students' application of skills, such as problem solving strategies and providing evidence to support opinions remain as the integration of the CCLS work deepens. In addition, professional learning opportunities, including self-assessments that aim to nurture the instructional practice of all teachers, have not propelled student progress beyond a few percentage points on accountability measures. Specifically, academic growth for the majority of students has been limited for the past two years, as reflected in the school's Progress Report and State exam data. As a result, the school continues its inquiry work to identify effective structures to ensure that the instructional program is properly addressing skills identified as key areas of focus and that revisions are made as needed, in order to identify and fix the gaps to maximize student progress across all subject areas.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Mott Hall IV Middle School	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			X				
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?			X				
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?			X				
<b>School Culture</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?				X			
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?				X			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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 <b>inquiry approach</b> that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?		X					
<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>