

# **Quality Review Report 2012-2013**

**Mott Hall**

**High School 05M304**

**6 Edgecombe Avenue  
Manhattan  
NY 10030**

**Principal: Altagracia Villalona**

**Dates of review: April 11-12, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Anthony R. Lodico**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Mott Hall High School is a high school with 426 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 35% Black, 64% Hispanic, 0% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 88.5%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

### What the school does well

- School leaders' use of resources, scheduling and time are aligned with the school's goals and increases opportunities for student growth. (1.3)
  - The principal designates funds and resources to support student and adult learning. Currently, SMARTboards are available in every classroom and all teachers have a laptop and access to printers. Professional development and supports are in place to assure that the infusion of technology fully supports student growth and rigorous work products. There is a commitment to maintaining and strengthening partnerships which offer academic and youth development services for students. For example, partners such as Urban Scholars, College for Every Student, Brotherhood/Sister Soul and Helping Hands and Geriatric Career Development (GCD) all contribute to supporting student success and growth. For example, a parent credited his child's involvement with GCD as motivating him in being interested in pursuing the medical field as a college and a career choice. These funding and partner decisions support the school-wide instructional goals as evident in improved scholarship reports and credit accumulation.
  - The school schedule is structured so that teacher teams are able to meet three times per week allowing time for weekly departmental, inquiry and grade level meetings. Teams discuss specific student needs and identify changes needed to instruction, planning and supports. The English Language Arts team engages in "kid talk", sharing of best practices and effective strategies and data analysis as areas of focus resulting in positive impact on the improvement of instruction and meeting student needs. Student comments included that "many teachers want us to succeed and offer us the supports we need."
- Students benefit from a safe, nurturing and supportive learning environment that promotes social-emotional and academic growth. (1.4)
  - The academic and social-emotional needs of students are supported by a team of dedicated staff members and strong community partnerships. From morning entry and throughout the school day, teachers, administrators, deans, guidance personnel and support staff all work collaboratively to create a culture of learning and growth. Students have an active voice through regular town hall meetings and by working closely with the administrators and coordinator of student activities. Students spoke about an appreciation of the variety of clubs and community service opportunities for which they had input. One student outlined the procedure to start a club or start an event. Partnerships with Urban Scholars, College for Every Student (CFES), Helping Hands, New York Cares and Geriatric Career Development Program (GCD) enable students to be involved in community service opportunities as well as helping to secure additional academic supports and career and college planning opportunities for all students. For example, through the Urban Scholars partnership, college students conduct tutoring sessions, mentoring and classroom presentations based on student need. The school's social worker serves as the liaison between the volunteers and faculty to ensure that student needs are being met. Furthermore, the school ensures opportunities for families and guardians to be engaged as well. Workshops are available to parents for training on how to use the online grading system as well as learning about graduation requirements and reading transcripts. Students

and parents describe a culture where adults support student growth aimed at preparing them for college and career.

- School leaders and staff convey high expectations to staff, students and families and offer supports that impacts student and adult learning. (3.4)
  - Staff, students and parents communicate the expectation that all students will be college and career ready upon graduation. Students and families are expected to be partners in the journey and the expectations and requirements are communicated through guidance, parent outreach and teacher conferences. For example, the guidance counselor conducts classroom presentations in addition to her one-on-one meetings and parent outreach through letters and presentations. The outreach and presentations focus on college and career readiness and high school requirements. Additionally, through cycles of formal and informal observations and subsequent professional development opportunities, teachers know and understand the elements of good practice and professionalism and are supported to continuously elevate the quality of teaching. Furthermore, with the support of the network, individual coaching of teachers was offered through Ramapo enabling selected teachers to have coaching throughout the year. This commitment to high expectations and supports for students, teachers and families is summed up in a students' statements that "teachers motivate us to do well," and "I am expected to go to college."

## What the school needs to improve

- Increase the opportunities for all learners to be cognitively engaged in Common Core aligned tasks that consistently promote higher order thinking and rigorous work products. (1.1)
  - Academic tasks and lessons are created to align with the Common Core Learning Standards. Argumentative writing is adopted as a school-wide initiative across content areas and teacher team meetings afford opportunities for reflection on practice and data analysis. For example, teachers shared that the student "target lists" generated by administration and guidance, test item analysis and kid talk have all added to their ability to offer more focused academic intervention services and supports for their students. However, the work being done in the teams has not yet translated to a consistent design and delivery of rigorous and challenging tasks for all students. In a ninth grade English Language Arts (ELA) class, all students were peer-editing argumentative essays and expected to use the rubric to identify thesis, claims, counterclaims and citations while in other classrooms lessons were teacher-directed and few students were expected to engage in challenging or rigorous tasks. Classroom visits showed inconsistent practice of scaffolding for English language learners, students with disabilities and struggling learners and results in a diversity of learners not being cognitively engaged in challenging learning experiences.
- Strengthen the use of effective pedagogical strategies to increase levels of student thinking and active engagement for a diversity of learners. (1.2)
  - In alignment with school-wide goals, it is a shared belief that in order for students to be college and career ready, there must be consistent, high levels of academic rigor in all classrooms while students are actively engaged and immersed in accountable talk. Many teachers are using Webb's Depth of Knowledge matrix to ensure the incorporation of higher level questions, student-to-student interaction and deeper thinking. For example, in a tenth grade integrated co-teaching English class questions were scaffolded to ensure that the lower level recall questions were followed by higher level questions prompting analytical and higher level

thinking. In a grade 11 English class, the teacher facilitated student to student interaction and expected students to always follow-up their answer with an explanation of “why”. However in other classes the primary arrow of recitation was teacher to student and questioning and tasks were not challenging. For example, in a science class, all students copied answers onto a worksheet as the teacher lectured and described the images on a PowerPoint presentation. Students did not have opportunities to analyze, make inferences or draw conclusions based on the images. As a result, students are not consistently challenged nor immersed in rigorous tasks across all classrooms and subjects. (a, b)

- Build upon the work of teacher teams and individual teachers in using formative and summative assessments to inform and adjust instructional practice and curricula. (2.2)
  - Test item analyses of Regents and mock Regents exams are a key component of the work that teachers are doing in teams and individually. This is coupled with the sharing of best practices, focusing on students in the lowest third in performance and using strategies of re-teaching/re-testing and the creation of academic services for struggling students. This has led to an increase in the passing rates of this subgroup. Additionally, teachers explained that the “kid talk”, data analysis and infusion of more technology into curricula and lessons contributed to the academic gains for English language learners, students with disabilities and struggling learners in general. However, ongoing checks for understanding during classroom instruction are inconsistent. Some teachers circulated to take the “pulse” of the class and individuals by checking for understanding of content and skill and some asked for student responses to answers. As a result, assessment of student understanding during lessons is not effectively monitored and utilized to adjust instruction as a school-wide practice thus limiting the potential for sustained student academic support and progress.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Mott Hall High 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 inquiry approach 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>   Underdeveloped	<b>D</b>   Developing	<b>P</b>   Proficient	<b>WD</b>   Well Developed	