



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Quality Review
Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning
2013-2014

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Mott Hall Community School

Middle School 467

650 Hollywood Avenue

**Bronx
NY 10465**

Principal: Juana Rosario

Dates of review: May 19 - 20, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Luz T. Cortazzo

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Mott Hall Community School is a middle school with 260 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 15% Black, 66% Hispanic, 16% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 91.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has created thoughtful structures and support within a culture of positive attitudes that promotes students' social, academic, and emotional well-being, creating an environment that is conducive to learning. (1.4)
 - The principal's coherent approach to culture building, discipline and social emotional support is informed by a theory of action that incorporates the implementation of the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Program (PBIS), and the Mott Hall Community School shared school mission and vision. The school is in its first year of embracing the (PBIS) system that is well integrated throughout the school and helps to foster the development of an inclusive and respectful school tone. On a daily basis, students are rewarded for exhibiting specific traits such as Respect, Organization, Attendance and Responsibility (ROAR) and adults use stamps to promote and reinforce positive student behavior. Through the dissemination of stamps, affirmative traditions have been built into the school environment and students save and redeem earned stamps at the school store. Additionally, across classrooms, teachers engage students in group activities that foster positive social engagement and improve adult and student relationships across the school. Additionally, students have a voice through student council in all grades. This focused initiative has led to the reduction of incidents, notable positive behaviors, and improved attendance for targeted students. Furthermore, parents comment on the positive and respectful tone the school has achieved, and show support for the work that the principal and her staff are doing to improve the social emotional development of their children. The (PBIS) program has been significant in ensuring that the entire school community is involved in the school's improvement process and has resulted in improved student behavior. Consequently, based on the Online Occurrence Reporting System, (OORS), school-wide data from 2013 to 2014 shows a decrease in the number of principal suspensions.
 - Parents, staff, and students, unanimously agree that the school fosters a safe climate where students' social emotional and academic needs are readily addressed and underpins the 1% increase in student attendance rate year-to-date. The school's inclusive culture enables every student to be well known by a staff member who helps support their academic and social growth. Project Concepts partnership, a nine-week anti-bullying-peer pressure program for all students, is one of the many examples of how the staff collaborates to meet the academic and emotional needs of all students. As such, students and families appreciate that they can turn to teachers and members of the pupil personnel team to help resolve personal issues and concerns that interfere with learning. Parents state that they are kept "fully informed" and that their children prosper in the school's safe environment.

- The principal makes key decisions around the budget, staffing assignments, and the use of resources that support instructional goals to increase learning for all students. (1.3)
 - The principal's budget coupled with staff input results in the strategic use of resources that are well aligned to the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) and school-wide instructional goals. English language arts (ELA)/math instructional leads attend network institutes, turnkey strategies, and collaborate and coach individual teachers and teacher teams. Additionally, ELA and math consultants work with targeted teachers to support their planning and instruction, with an emphasis on integrating literacy into the content areas, as well as an emphasis on CMP3 implementation in math. Moreover, a dean of discipline was hired after a review of the school's Learning Environment survey (LES) and incident reports revealed safety concerns. Furthermore, the principal and staff made a decision to adopt CMP3, a new math program, and CODE X a new literacy program for grades 6 to 8, both of which are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Other initiatives such as technology integration support students as evidenced in the use of SMART Boards, iPads and ELMO document readers in most classrooms. Furthermore, strategic partnerships that promote student engagement, as well as the nurturing of students' interests, are scheduled strategically to complement other content area offerings throughout the school year. Grade specific activities such as Little Kids Rock music, STEM program, art, and Chess in the Schools, are aligned to curricula. As a result, students benefit from enrichment activities that promote the school's goals and meet students' learning needs.
 - Teacher assignments and student groupings are strategic as seen in the integrated co-teaching (ICT) classes, Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) support in ELA and math, and multiple configurations of teacher teams. Consequently, students receive instruction in a supportive learning environment and benefit from thought-provoking tasks in order to achieve at a higher level. Staff is grouped in a variety of collaborative teams and hold considerable meetings two to three times per week to look at student work, examine data results, modify instruction to shift teacher practice, revise curriculum and refine performance tasks. As a result of these strategic decisions, time-on-task is optimized for the entire school community, which has resulted in teachers presenting lessons to students that yield meaningful work products that are beginning to reflect high levels of student thinking as evidenced in math lessons in sixth and seventh grade math classes. These practices have resulted in greater opportunities for students to self-assess and to be more accountable for the outcome of the lesson.
- The regular analysis of student performance data provides school staff with a comprehensive view of students' strengths and next steps, resulting in targeted interventions that positively impact performance. (2.2)
 - Teachers use student work samples, conference notes, rubrics, exit slips, student self -assessment tracking sheet , "I can statements", and end-of-unit performance tasks for Code X and critical area performance tasks in math aligned to CCLS to gauge student understanding of the taught

curricula, and they analyze students' work to provide feedback to students. In one sixth grade math class students use the net of a rectangular prism to calculate the surface area of a three dimensional figure. Students were asked to apply these techniques in the context of solving real world and math problems. Students worked in pairs to cut the 3-D figure to discover its net, they were asked to sketch the net of the box, measure the sides and calculate the surface area of the 3-D figure. In a seventh grade ELA class, students read an Informational excerpt from an informational article, "The End of Poverty" to determine the key idea of the excerpt. Students talk together to help each other think about what details to include and how to explain those details. As such, students are becoming cognizant of the connections between the tasks and the expectations espoused by the CCLS. Additionally, the school utilizes Engrade Pro, a web-based grading tool to monitor student growth, track student grades, and note students' strengths and needs. Consequently, parents and students are able to know their strengths and needs on a daily or weekly basis, and teachers have an understanding of students' assessments results relative to selected standards with the goal of increased student outcomes.

- Assessment results, including student work products, are reviewed by grade level teams as evidenced during the ELA and math department meetings. Teacher teams use Looking at Student Work Protocol (LASW), to examine student work, and devise classroom strategies. Furthermore, teacher teams administer common assessments, use the results to measure students' progress toward specific goals, and provide relevant written feedback to students to increase their achievement levels, as well as to adjust and revise units of study and individual lessons. As such, teachers use common measurements to inform decisions on appropriate interventions during class, Academic Intervention Services provided during push-in programs, and implement strategies to support student progress in identified skills.
- Administrators support staff through observations, with specific feedback aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching that is improving teaching practices. (4.1)
 - The administration frequently observes teachers and based on low inference observations aligned with the Danielson rubric provides verbal and written feedback about questioning, discussions techniques, and student engagement,. The principal then prints data from The Danielson tracker in Advance, the teacher performance evaluation system, to note trends to develop a teacher support system based on this data. A review of the written feedback provided evidence that the administration shared frequent, specific, and timely feedback with staff across Danielson's domains and components. Further, during individual conversations with teachers, administration reviews patterns, student work products, and uses this information to tailor next steps linked to teacher needs such as increasing teacher effectiveness through targeted professional development, considering the majority of newer staff. As a result, a review of observation reports revealed most teachers moving on the continuum from developing in September to effective in May in domains 1 and 3. Thus, as a result of multiple forms and sources of feedback, teachers continue to refine their pedagogical practices and exhibit

understanding of grade appropriate strategies that elicit progress in student understanding.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand on the process of the refinement of CCLS aligned curricula across all grades and content areas in order to build coherence and emphasize rigorous skills to prepare all students for the next level. (1.1)
 - The implementation of new ELA and math programs has required teacher teams to work closely to identify the gaps in student learning and adjust curriculum. Teacher teams examine alignment of curricula and refine academic tasks using Depth of Knowledge principles (DOK) and an analysis of student products relative to a tuning protocol. While Regents courses are offered to eighth graders in Living Environment and Algebra, during classroom instruction, and a review of lesson plans, it was evidenced that the school does not consistently create scaffolds and multiple entry points for students with disabilities and English language learners. Thus access to the curricula for all students, and a push to cognitively engage them through rigorous activities and extensions to their learning, is not ensured. Consequently, not all learners are meeting the demands to close the achievement gap, as evidenced in some assessment data and student work products.
- Strengthen the alignment between teacher practice and the school's beliefs about learning, to ensure high levels of engagement and thinking, so that all learners reach their full potential. (1.2)
 - The school's shared beliefs is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and emphasizes the importance of building students communication skills through meaningful and high level questioning and discussion across classrooms with professional development support to staff from lead teachers, the network, as well as literacy and math consultants. All curricula include essential questions, learning objectives starting with the statement "I can", and higher order tasks that support student's written work and push them to take ownership of their learning. As seen during classroom visits, teachers plan and deliver instruction to support student learning. However, the focus on open-ended questions that invite discussions among students is not yet the norm. For example, in some classrooms teachers ask questions directed to individual students, yet follow-up questions about how they arrived at an answer were not always prompted. This results in uneven levels of student thinking, as noted in student work products and as evidenced by limited participation of students in discussions across classrooms.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Mott Hall Community School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?		X					
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the 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				
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports 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 those expectations?			X				
Systems for Improvement							
<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 student 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 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?			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				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed