



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Mother Hale Academy

Elementary School 07X065

**677 East 141st Street
Bronx
NY 10454**

Principal: Jasmine Gonzalez

Date of review: November 17, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Yolanda Torres

The School Context

Mother Hale Academy is an elementary school with 425 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 33% Black, 64% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 88.0%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
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	Additional Findings	Proficient
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	Focus	Developing
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	Additional Findings	Proficient
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Additional Findings	Developing
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings:

The structured professional collaborations amongst teachers provide weekly opportunities for grade-wide planning, discussion of effective practices with consultants and the analysis of student work to identify trends for student academic improvement.

Impact:

Teacher engagement in ongoing instructional collaborations leads to improved student outcomes as evidenced in the student writing pieces.

Supporting Evidence:

- Teacher teams meet minimally twice a week and use Teacher Team Protocols to engage in data-based conversations around student work in order to agree on next steps for student achievement.
- Teachers discuss lesson expectations and the alignment to the school-wide goals: small group instruction and questioning techniques for student in-depth thinking and problem solving. The collaborative planning leads to individual adjustment of instructional practices based on content-specific trends and/or classroom-specific needs.
- Consultants meet regularly with teacher teams to model instructional strategies based on the school-wide goals so that teachers can incorporate these in lessons and share the lesson outcomes with their colleagues.
- Professional development meetings and inter-visitations provide teachers with opportunities to share practices, use feedback to grow professionally, and have a better understanding of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and how low inference conversations contribute to improved teaching and learning.
- Teachers reflect on the implemented instructional practices and skills to ensure that these meet the needs of students as well as the instructional shifts and Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS).

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings:

Teacher practices align with the school-wide core beliefs on how students learn best as evidenced by increased opportunities to work with students in small groups.

Impact:

Small group work and teacher questioning strategies provide students with opportunities to engage in high level discussions. However, inconsistent teaching practices lead to uneven participation of students in discussion and group work.

Supporting Evidence:

- There is evidence of small group instruction in most classrooms. Students participate in talks with their peers and activities that help them focus on vocabulary development, text details for reading comprehension improvement, and tiered questions for critical thinking growth. However, this school-wide goal is at the developing stage.
- The school-wide schedule provides a Response-to-Intervention (Rti) daily period by reducing the teacher-to-student ratio in order to address students' individual needs based on the formative assessment results. This is a newly-embedded strategic time to work with targeted groups of student, such as English language learners and students with disabilities.
- Teachers plan lessons with "I can" statements so that students engage in standards-based lessons with higher order questions that challenge them to think critically. Although there is evidence of teacher-generated questions to engage students in accountable talk, there is inconsistent evidence that all students are exposed to high levels of questions from classroom to classroom.
- The use of technology provides students with an additional instructional enhancement in support of their learning as evidenced by students engaging in interactive activities that afford them with opportunities to expand their knowledge.
- During professional development there is ongoing focus on the Danielson Framework for Teaching as well as emphasis on teaching practices and strategies that meet students' individual needs to challenge their thinking at their level of understanding. However, this is not evident in most classrooms.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings:

The school has refined the processes of ongoing assessments for consistent use of data analysis in all classrooms in order to ascertain next steps for student achievement.

Impact:

The ongoing use of data and looking at student work improves teachers' understanding on how to refocus their lessons and practices resulting in improved student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Formative data such as running records, teacher observations and conference notes provide teachers with vital information that leads to instructional adjustments and/or additional tiered support to meet the needs of students.
- Teachers share student work at their weekly meetings. As they provide collegial feedback, they identify the areas where students are performing well and the areas in need of focus. These conversations contribute to grade-wide decision-making on the implementation of strategies and/or re-teaching of lessons to ensure that all students are part of the sphere of successful learning.
- The standards-aligned curricula provide beginning, middle and end-of-unit assessments for overall understanding how students are progressing through lessons. Students have opportunities to reflect on their work and see their progress over time.
- On-the-spot conferrals during small group instruction and work assist teachers in learning more about their students and how to help them achieve. This one-on-one conference provides students with the opportunity of meaningful conversations with their teachers for individual progress.
- Teachers use rubrics to assess student work. As teachers provide feedback to students for next steps towards improvement, students use the feedback to focus on their progress towards the attainment of the grade-specific goals.

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings:

School leaders and teachers continue to work with CCLS-aligned curricula and the integration of the Citywide Instructional Expectations.

Impact:

The implementation of the CCLS-aligned curricula has led teachers to understand the expected outcomes of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) resulting in teachers owning the language and reflecting on their practice.

Supporting Evidence

- Based on prior year of experience with the CCLS-aligned curricula, Ready Gen and Go Math!, school leaders and teachers have reviewed the units of study and have added scaffolds to the lessons to ensure all learners' access to standards-based lessons.
- School leaders have ensured that teachers and service providers meet regularly to discuss strategic interventions for differentiated tasks with standards-based foci that meet the needs of at-risk populations.
- As teachers look at student work, they identify the attributes aligned to the standards so as to reflect on their own practices to assure that the delivery of instruction is deliberate and purposeful, but at the same time, meeting varied learners' instructional needs.
- In order to build instructional coherence, school leaders and teachers have revised last year's work and have infused scaffolds based on data and teacher feedback contributing to customized curricula that address and meet the needs of the school for overall improvement.
- School leaders have identified teacher leaders who can share effective practices on how they engage varied learners, specifically English language learners and students with disabilities, in rich discussions with evidentiary claims to support their positions.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Developing
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Findings:

Although the school leaders indicate that they communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, there is a disproportionate understanding of the connection to college and career readiness on behalf of the parents.

Impact:

The school leaders focus their efforts in establishing a culture of learning with high expectations and supports in order to achieve them. However, not all parents connect to the understanding of these expectations leading to dissonance in parent engagement.

Supporting Evidence

- The Danielson Framework for Teaching provides teachers with a vision of expected outcomes in the communication of high expectations and the importance of establishing authentic rapport with their students. Students appreciate the support their teachers provide them in learning and in the social emotional aspect. They like their school and feel part of a culture that is welcoming and nurturing. Nonetheless, there is still lack of clarity amongst students on what they need to do to prepare for the next level.
- During the weekly professional development sessions, the school leaders focus on expectations that enhance teacher pedagogy that result in teacher inter-visitations in order to share their practices with one another. This practice engages teachers in ongoing training so that the school-wide accountability is fully understood by all staff.
- Parent Teacher Conferences serve as an informational venue for parents to partake in a reciprocal dialogue with teachers on their children's progress. Unfortunately, not all parents are aware of the newly established day for weekly Parent Engagement activities, thereby, parents articulate concerns with the lack of communication resulting in uneven levels of participation and understanding of expected outcomes.