



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Mott Hall III

09X128

**580 Crotona Park S
Bronx, NY 10456**

Principal: Jorisis Stupart

**Date of review: November 13, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Sandra Litrico**

School Context

Mott Hall III is a middle school with 728 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 40% Black, 57% Hispanic, 0% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94%.

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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Additional Findings	Proficient
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	Focus	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	Well Developed
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	Additional Findings	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Curricula in all subjects are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and rigorous tasks provide students with consistent learning opportunities to demonstrate higher order thinking.

Impact

The school's curriculum builds coherence across grades and subject areas and promotes college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The 6th grade science curriculum unit on Investigating the Nature of Science & Technology includes essential questions that push students' thinking and tasks that are engaging. Enrichment and differentiation tasks meet the needs of all learners. Students are asked to gather qualitative and quantitative observations during investigations, discuss and compare scientific findings and present their research. Multimedia images, movies, note taking and lab notebooks all support the understanding of the scientific process of designing, testing and analyzing an experiment. All activities are student led and students are challenged and assessed at the appropriate level.
- 8th grade English language arts (ELA) curriculum map includes the reading and discussion of high interest novels, articles from the New York Times and engages students in literature circles with independent reading books. The curriculum infuses social issues and history as students grapple with questions including: How does a place's historical background shape race relations? How did the conditions of Modern agriculture come to exist, and who is responsible for changing them? Argumentative writing assessments ask student to state a claim and support their opinions with evidence from the text. The unit also teaches, reading strategies, writing skills, grammar, and scaffolds including pre-taught vocabulary, visual aids, pauses with strategic comprehension questions, and varied genres of text provide multiple entry points and opportunities for connection.
- Planning Guides have been developed by administrators and department teams .There are essential curriculum components outlined including: organizing center (overarching idea of the unit), rationale, essential questions, guiding questions, diversified assessments, standards identification and alignment, performance criteria and reflective questions and meta-cognitive activities. These guides establish coherent practices for all content curriculum planning, assessment and progress tracking to inform their instruction. Each department has also developed unique lesson plan templates for use by all subject teachers. These lesson plans all emphasize student time on task, higher-order questions, strategies to meet student needs and checks for understanding.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Teachers have established a system of baseline, benchmark and final assessments that are coherent in each subject department and aligned with the school's curricula.

Impact

There is a clear picture of student progress toward goals across subjects and results are used to provide meaningful feedback to students and to adjust curricular. However, there is remaining work around creating structures that would allow the data to be effectively used to make meaningful classroom level instructional modifications so that English language learners and students with disabilities demonstrate increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- The development of targeted assessments has led to greater vertical alignment within these subject teams, across all grade levels and greater alignment of standards, curricular and assessment school wide. Data is used to help teachers determine which concepts they need to emphasize in their instruction and which sub skills students need to be taught in order to show mastery. However, classroom instruction did not reflect the use of data to modify instruction in terms of content, process or product for English language learners or students with disabilities. A case in point was the 8th grade social studies lesson on the Supreme Court decision in *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*. All students were given the same task of determining the gist of excerpts of majority and dissenting opinions. In the ELA classroom, there were also no scaffolds for students who were publishing their speeches with respectable presentation.
- In ELA, teachers use the Scranton Performance Series assessment as a baseline reading assessment to determine student lexile levels at the beginning of the school year. This information is shared online with all teachers and is updated in January and May when students are retested to determine their progress toward meeting their goals. Teachers also administer performance tasks that are included in the Expeditionary Learning Curriculum, the item analysis on ARIS and ELA State test questions from Engage NY. They look for patterns in their incorrect answers, skill gaps, difficulties with reading passages and stamina. The use of this data during classroom observations was focused on regrouping students and reteaching concepts.
- Teachers have customized systems for formative assessments to inform their instruction including the use of checklists, Gradecam quizzes, assessment cards and exit tickets. They are continuing to strengthen their use of assessment data to ensure that the needs of subgroups are met. As a result of this need, the staff has made formative assessment one of the major topics of study on their professional learning Inquiry groups.
- The school uses rubrics across all content areas. The Social Studies NYC Performance Assessment Rubric scores students on argument and organization counterclaim, using documents, primary and secondary sources, comparing documents, evidentiary support, historical information and concepts. It also includes a self-reflection. In ELA the expository writing evaluation rubric criteria includes: content analysis, command of evidence, coherence, organization and style, control of conventions, and presentation.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Students are engaged in cognitively challenging and accessible tasks as teachers engage them in discussions and investigations utilizing an inquiry approach to learning.

Impact

Instructional practices promote high levels of student thinking across content areas.

Supporting Evidence

- In math class, teachers use the inquiry approach of the CMP3 curriculum to engage students in problem solving investigations that allow for collaborative support and higher-level learning. In the 6th grade math class the students were studying ratios and were asked to explore what is the best way to display the data so that it follows a mathematical sequence. The data was written on strips and students worked in groups to figure out a mathematical sequence.
- In science, investigations drive the curriculum. Students conduct investigations, write lab reports and draw conclusions based on observations and informational text. The learning target in the science class observed was “I can use a physical model to examine aspects of the natural world”. The teacher asked students to discuss whether or not all volcanic eruptions are the same and to support their claims with evidence from the text. Students used accountable talk language as they agreed, disagreed and added on to what their peers had said. Following the text based discussion; students put on their lab coats and were ready to conduct an experiment.
- In ELA, students conduct close reading of complex text and use protocols and graphic organizers to discuss and capture their findings. They engage in Socratic seminars and literacy circles. Students write analytical essays that they self-assess using rubrics. In the 8th grade lesson, students were writing a speech on who was the true culprit in the death of Tom Robinson” The “I can” statement read: “I can publish my speech with respectable presentation”. The students are learning how to present their work as they would in high school and/or college. These pieces become part of their portfolio.
- In social studies, teachers teach students to make inferences and cite evidence from texts, including primary source documents, to conduct research. Students learn how to develop counter claims using evidence, as well as, how to refute counterclaims. Students develop, write and present arguments about topics such as “How should historians portray Christopher Columbus?” and How do contemporary policies such as “Stop and Frisk” and “Open Carry” hold up under the Bill of Rights.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school leader has effectively partnered with staff, parents and students to create a system of high learning expectations and a culture of mutual accountability for those expectations.

Impact

Teacher teams and staff have a unified set of high expectations for all students and provide clear and effective feedback to ensure that all students are independent thinkers who are prepared for college and career. There are also high expectations regarding professionalism, planning curriculum and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- During classroom observations, students were able to comprehend and evaluate complex texts across a range of disciplines and construct effective arguments. They also engage in discussion where they independently build on others ideas, articulate their own ideas and ask relevant questions. The students also cite specific evidence when offering an oral or written interpretation to a text.
- Parents are required to attend a parent orientation meeting where they receive information they need to ensure their child's success. Teachers update and post students grades every week using an online grading program called Edline. Teachers also meet with parents regularly to ensure that they are informed of their child's progress.
- Students learn about the school's expectations for their success and the procedures they need to follow to meet those expectations during the weeklong student orientation program. The school is guided by the 3 C's: citizenship, caring and conviction. The students are informed that the minimum passing grade is 75% because they believe that students cannot be successful in middle school and qualify for admission to high quality high schools if they do not maintain this average. The school publishes a school calendar and handbook for students each year. Information includes school wide policies, testing dates, special family events and phone and email contact information for each teacher. Teachers assist students in setting goals, tracking progress and reflecting on their goals.
- The school-wide enrichment model offers talent-focused classes to the entire school once a week. These small groups meet with a faculty advisor to develop their talents in chess, dance, chorus, digital photography, and culinary arts among others.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

All teachers are involved in focused teacher teams that collaboratively analyze classroom practice, assessment data, student work, and curricular products for the purpose of making thoughtful adjustments to teacher practice and to increase CCLS alignment.

Impact

Teachers participate regularly on teams that have a clear instructional focus supported by professional inquiry based structures and protocols that have resulted in improved teacher pedagogy and increased student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are organized into a variety of teams which all have an instructional focus. The vertical department teams have collaborated on coherent practices that are outlined in the schools Planning Guides which shape the expectations for planning, assessment, and progress monitoring during the year. These teams meet weekly to examine student tasks, discuss implementation of curriculum, and analyze data from benchmark assessments. Horizontal teams comprising all teachers on a grade meet weekly to plan grade team initiatives, problem solve around common areas of concern and discuss student needs. Teachers are also organized into planning teams by grade and subject.
- Monday professional learning time is devoted to inquiry based learning groups based on four areas of growth for their students: differentiated instruction, formative assessment, questioning and discussion techniques and writing instruction. Teachers self-selected their groups, identified outcomes and actions and located a professional test to guide their research. Teachers take turns facilitating and administrators attend group meetings to support learning.
- In the 2013-2014 school year, 29% of students achieved a level 3 and 4 on ELA compared to 24.5% the previous year. In math level 3 and 4 students increased from 33.3% to 38.5%.