



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Hernando Desoto School

Public School 130

**143 Baxter Street
New York
NY 10013**

Principal: Lily Woo

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Reviewer: Charles Lupton

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Hernando Desoto School is a pre-kindergarten through 5th grade elementary school serving a mixed ethnic population of 88% Asian and others, 5.4% Hispanic, 4% White and 3% Black. English language learners make up 26% of the students with the main language being Chinese and the school has bilingual classes to support these students. The school has 8% special education students whose needs are catered for in general education classes and in two self contained special education classes. The school has a talented and gifted class for each grade except pre-kindergarten.

The school receives Title 1 funding with 65% eligibility. The attendance rate, at 98%, puts the school in the top ten for the City.

This is an empowerment school. Empowerment schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is highly respected and, with her committed staff, has the clear capacity to continue to drive continued school improvement.
- The school has a clear understanding of the relative performance of classes, grades and each individual student.
- High expectations are conveyed to students and parents effectively.
- The curriculum is carefully selected to provide good learning opportunities for all students in all subjects.
- The multi-faceted arts curriculum supports and enhances learning very effectively, increasing student involvement and motivation.
- The school is very effective in meeting the needs of all individuals, including those most in need and higher achieving students, without compromising the achievement of others.
- The quality of student work on bulletin boards is very high and complements the good learning environment nurtured by the school.
- Professional development is of high quality and is generally linked to the school goals.
- Interpersonal relationships between all members of the school community are very good resulting in high levels of trust and good behavior.
- The school is very successful in supporting parental involvement in the school and in their children's learning.

Areas for Improvement

- Develop long-term, whole school planning to include more precise interim and objective success measures to facilitate closer monitoring of the implementation of school plans.
- Ensure that there is greater consistency in the methods used to collect qualitative data to support the good utilization of quantitative data.
- Build upon the examples of good differentiated instruction to develop this throughout the school, ensuring active student engagement in all classes.
- Continue to monitor the relative performance of ethnic groups and take action if appropriate.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The principal is highly respected and leads the school very effectively, overseeing its progressive development. Despite this, she and her teams are not complacent and continue to drive for incremental improvement. Both qualitative and quantitative data is used well to inform a deep understanding of where the school is and to plan into the future. The school is very effective in planning for and raising academic achievement for all the students without compromising on depth of understanding as well as providing a full range of curricular opportunities to support the whole child.

When planning for the future, the school sets clear goals, most of which are quantitative. The plans contain timeframes and interim success criteria. However, these measures are generally based upon qualitative rather than quantitative data. Good professional development opportunities support school planning and individual teachers.

The school sets very high expectations for the students and is successful in achieving them through good instruction based upon identified need. The good curriculum is enhanced very well through provision for the arts. The parents are very supportive of the school and the very good relationships their children enjoy with staff.

This school is currently engaged in a research project to investigate the impact of differentiation on groups of students in each class. This work is on-going.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school is rigorous in utilizing available quantitative data to ensure it has a clear understanding of the relative performance of each part of the organization. The data is disaggregated to provide a detailed overview of the relative progress of classes, grades and each individual student. To corroborate this data and to maintain an on-going, up-to-date awareness of the school's performance, the school generates and uses a wide range of qualitative data. For example, data is used to identify students who are potentially being held over which, by default, provides a clear picture of students who are achieving well. This is a stringent measure as the school's criteria for hold-over students applies to any student currently performing at level 2. Data shows that, during the year, the number of students identified has fallen significantly since September, when they were identified.

The school has clear and effective procedures for monitoring the progress of special education students and English language learners. The City has recognized the school to be a High Achieving, Gap-Closing school for English language learners. The majority of students become English proficient within one year, although the school continues to support these children in refining their English language skills to ensure they become fully fluent in all aspects of the language. The school monitors the relative performance of

ethnic groups annually. Data indicates that all ethnic groups are currently performing comparably so the school does not monitor more frequently.

The school is also effectively focused on other student groups including high achievers and students identified as in need. For example, the school identifies students achieving at level 2 in general education classes and those performing less well in gifted and talented classes. The school is clear about its relative performance in comparison to other schools and its own past performance.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

This is a collaborative school. Despite the continued growth in academic performance, the school is not complacent and all members of the community, including the parents, work very hard and well together to continue to drive the school forward. Data indicates that achievement in mathematics is higher than in English language arts, resulting in the majority of planning being linked to improving performance in this area. The school has identified that the need to decode mathematical problems and explain answers underlines the need to enhance further English language arts provision. This is similar for other subjects. Clear and effective plans are in place to develop this for each student, class and grade, resulting in continuous school improvement. Although the plans contain quantifiable goals, these are not sufficiently demanding. Suitable timeframes are included in the planning.

Particular attention is focused on English language learners, special education students and those at risk of under-achievement. The academic intervention services are very effective in supporting these students and achievement is clearly demonstrated. Other student groups are also identified well and supported as effectively. The school plans for and implements very good arts provision that significantly enhances the education for each student.

The school has very high expectations for each student, matched to the individual. For the majority of students, the expectation is for students to achieve at least a level 3. The whole school community is very aware of this and works very well to make the expectation a reality. Parents are well informed about their child’s progress and levels of work required. For example, during curriculum evenings, exemplar work is used to demonstrate expectation.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The school is exempt from the mandated curriculum, having the freedom to devise its own. It does this very well, with good provision for each subject and the arts. The curriculum is designed to provide quantitative data, in particular reading progress and a wealth of qualitative data that is used productively to monitor student progress and inform instruction

very well. However, there is some inconsistency in how this data is recorded between classes, making scrutiny less effective than it could be.

Resulting from empowerment status, a year-long study project investigating the impact of differentiation on selected students is raising awareness of the need for differentiation and its implementation. The school reports this is having a positive effect on all instruction. Evidence seen indicates this is the case in most classes visited where differentiation was observed, some of it of high quality with active student engagement. In other classes, although every student was engaged in their work, they were not always engaged actively. Each teacher had planned their instruction well and very good resources were available to support learning. Clear, helpful process charts and rubrics support instruction and student work is well displayed.

Through discussion, observation and data analysis, teachers are held accountable. All staff know the students very well, both academically and socially and are very good at responding to individual and group needs. For example, when students require additional help, the teachers provide tutorials during their lunch hour and after school. This cements the strong relationships and ensures that the students behave very well. Students respect and trust the teachers and know they can go to them for any support they need. The principal knows each student and many of the families.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are good and are made to enhance the school. For example, through budgetary choice, the arts curriculum is fully staffed and scheduled for each student. Financing is supported by the Parent Teacher Association. Very high student attendance is maintained through effective measures.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

When hiring new staff, the principal, supported by a committee, is rigorous in hiring people who agree with the school vision, already understand balanced literacy and have a strong work ethic. Teachers must understand how to 'take students from where they are and move them individually'. To ensure this, many appointments are made from known students or staff are given a trial period during which they should also demonstrate their ability to use data. This is effective.

The need for continuous, good professional development is understood by all members of staff and is an integral part of this school. It is carefully linked to individual need and to the needs of the school and is very well supported by a staff developer. There are frequent planned inter-visitations within and between grades and many informal ones as well.

Lessons are observed frequently and constructive verbal and written feedback is given that is designed to move staff forward. There is a strong mentoring system within the school and each grade has an effective grade leader with a defined role. This results in a good teamwork throughout the school with open, reflective practice leading to staff and student improvement.

The principal is highly respected and well supported by an equally respected assistant principal. With their team, they have the clear capacity to continue to develop the school. The school is very orderly and calm in classes and at changeovers with clear procedures.

The school is supported by a wide variety of outside agencies and support services that enhance academic achievement and student welfare very well. For example, the school works with the Chinese-American Planning Council, Saint Vincent's Hospital World Trade Center Healing Services and the American Ballroom Theatre.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is a clear document that contains good data analysis by grade and for the whole school. It is primarily focused on improving English language arts provision in each subject area as this is seen as fundamental to supporting this community in achieving well as so much emphasis is placed upon English within the other subjects. There are links between the Comprehensive Education Plan and the Principal's Performance Review through the development of differentiated instruction with a particular focus on English language arts. Plans contain long-term goals but not all have objective, success criteria. In those that do, the goals are not sufficiently demanding. Each plan contains considered interim success measures but these are not routinely based on specified objective data. However, the school uses qualitative data well to monitor progress towards its goals through comparison of student outcomes and across classrooms.

When required, the school changes its planning to reflect circumstance and to inform future planning. For example, although mathematics is not a focus in planning for this year, data from the Princeton Review indicated a possible drop in student performance. This has resulted in new study groups being set up to investigate and will result in the incorporation of mathematics into next year's plan. The school is also flexible in adapting implementation. For example, when a technology teacher left the school mid-year, the school readjusted its scheduling and staffing to ensure the technology goal in the Principal's Performance Review remained intact.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Hernando Desoto (PS 130)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score			X

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each student, classroom, grade level, 			X
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 		X	
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all other categories of interest to the school* 			X
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.			X
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X