

**Public School 134: Henrietta Szold School**

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**293 East Broadway  
Manhattan  
NY 10002**

**Principal: Loretta Caputo**

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**Reviewer: John Francis  
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# Public School 134: Henrietta Szold School

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## Public School 134: Henrietta Szold School

### Part1: The School Context.

#### Information about the school

This pre-kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade school has 389 students on roll, with many more males (54%) than females (46%). Fifty six percent of the students are Hispanic, around 25% Black American and 20% Asian. However, fewer than 10% are English language learners. Around 15% are special education students. Almost 80% of the students are Title 1 eligible.

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## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The leadership of the school has a clear, shared vision of where the school is going and a determination to make it succeed.
- School strategic planning is clearly focused on improvement and uses all the information available to formulate detailed plans with clear success criteria.
- Regular, good quality professional development is building capacity across the school.
- There is continuous improvement in students' performance in all major subject areas over the last three years, particularly the proportion of students reaching the higher levels.
- The well-developed English curriculum and good quality teaching is successfully raising students' performance in English and is particularly effective in raising standards for boys.
- The intervention programs for those students who need extra support in English are well developed and very successful in improving the proficiency of these students.
- Students' behavior is very good. The students relate well to each other and respond well to the opportunities the school provides.
- Curriculum innovations such as 'Mathematics Month' enable students to develop their numeracy skills in interesting ways, which are enjoyable as well as successful in raising standards. The introduction of 'Everyday Mathematics' helps students see the everyday uses of numbers and is improving their mathematics skills.
- Teaching generally is good quality and students respond well to the level of challenge and the range of teaching styles and methods.

### What the school needs to improve

- Revise the way in which mathematics is planned and taught, particularly for those students who find it difficult and for the highest performers, so that teachers are less reliant on the textbook being used for all students and align work more closely to the level of the students' needs.
- Produce a recording system that allows the school and the teachers to track students' progress more closely during the year and set personal goals.
- Develop ways of calibrating students' work that gives all teachers a common view on what constitutes each grade level and what students' skills need to do to reach this.
- Work towards raising levels of attendance and improving punctuality through developing ways of, for example, recognizing and rewarding individual improvement.
- Continue to work on ways of generating greater parental interest so they are involved more closely in what goes on in school.

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### Part 3: Main Findings

#### Overall Evaluation

##### **This is a well-developed school.**

The school's leadership has a relentless drive towards continuous improvement through good quality professional development (PD) and through building capacity. Standards have risen steadily with the proportion of higher grades increasing, and through the well-developed intervention programs, a significant reduction in the proportion of those at the lower grades. The students respond well to the challenges provided by the teachers and behavior and attitudes are very good.

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

**Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.**

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

The school uses a good range of data and other information to monitor students' performance and the progress they make. Data has been used well to identify weaknesses in aspects of English performance, for example. From this evaluation, the school has been able to develop the curriculum, improve instruction and purchase a wide range of more suitable reading texts for students. As a result, grades have risen significantly over the last three years, particularly for those performing at levels 3 and 4, which has improved from below 39% to over 51%. There has also been a matching fall in the numbers of students attaining the lower Level 1, from over 23% down to just over 8%. The improvements have been most marked in the Black and male student groups. Currently the data has identified developmental needs in aspects of science.

As well as the test and assessment data, for example, from writing samples, the school leadership also gathers information in more informal ways through discussions with teachers and students. These are shared through mechanisms such as common preparation time and grade conferences. However, this data tends to be shared within grades rather than across them. Giving greater access to this information would involve all teachers in understanding more of the whole school issues. Additionally, data is not always in a simple format that would allow teachers to see quickly and clearly where students are performing particularly well or in need of additional intervention between marking periods.

**Quality Statement 2: 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.**

School leaders, counselors and coaches work together closely to ensure that the needs of all

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students are met proficiently. The school has well-developed processes for identifying students most in need of improvement and uses a range of indicators such as attendance figures, test scores at the end of units and grades at the end of marking periods are all used as indicators. In addressing these needs, collaboration with parents makes the process proficient. For example, the parent conferences during the year and the 'meet the teacher' events at the start of the year are the main opportunities for teachers to meet with parents. Teachers also know their students well which also help to identify those at risk. Teachers keep daily running records, for example, from reading periods and this data is used effectively to track students' progress. Writing samples are analyzed to determine group needs and influence the daily planning agenda. However, there is no regular, consistent calibration of this between classes or any clearly devised rubrics for teachers to use to ensure all students are being challenged. There is a need for more personal goals that are more formalized than the current ad-hoc arrangements.

Data is used well to analyze students' performance and track the growth of different groups over the year. There are well-developed systems to identify those students in need of additional support, particularly in English. As a result, the school has put into place successful intervention strategies that are well aligned to these identified needs. Special education teaching staff and paraprofessionals work well to provide a consistent approach. Regular analysis of students' work and detailed records for these students track their performance and growth on an almost daily basis and enable further interventions to be put in place if needed.

**Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.**

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

While much of the curriculum is mandated, the school has developed innovative ways of extending this and encouraging students. A good example of this is seen in the work done in 'mathematics month'. The wide range of mathematics projects across all curricular areas excites and actively involves students. Because of initiatives such as this many students say they really enjoy mathematics and find it interesting. While teachers do feel vulnerable because of the demands of the examination curriculum, these opportunities present interesting ways of teaching the same topics and often make them more relevant to students. With this increased interest comes improved application through this integrated approach to instruction. However, there is currently a need to revise the way in which mathematics in general is planned and taught, particularly for those students who find it difficult or who are very proficient, so that teachers are less reliant on the textbook being used for all students and align work more closely to the level of the students' needs. The extending of the higher performing students is also something that the school is actively reviewing, particularly the proportion of students performing at Level 4.

Well-targeted use of the budget and flexibility enables the school to develop many of the priorities identified for the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP). Educational issues drive the budget, for example, the provision for special education students and the employment of coaches to raise teachers' skills in mathematics and science.

Regular formal and informal observation by the leadership and the opportunities for all staff to be involved in peer observation gives confidence to teachers and allows best practice to be shared. Teachers also share research projects with the principal. The benefits of this can be seen in the well-developed English curriculum and well-targeted planning that is raising

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students' performance, in particular for boys. The benefits of this to the school as a whole are seen in the good quality of instruction, the confidence of the teachers and the high retention rate.

The school has set itself an overall target for attendance but in spite of the work done by, for example, the Parent Coordinator, has some way to go in order to reach their target. Tardiness also remains a serious issue for the school to address and the systems currently in place for recording this are not sufficiently robust or consistently applied. Further strategies are needed to encourage and reward regular attendance and improve punctuality, for example, through developing additional ways of recognizing and rewarding improvements for individual students.

**Quality Statement 4: 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 overall well developed.**

Good work is being done towards the professional development (PD) of the staff, including 'calendar days' at the Teachers' College and leadership training for some, which is brought back into school for the benefits of all. There is regular coaching for all grades across the year. This is well supported through the targeted use of professional development funds to ensure maximum impact. There is a well-developed program of professional development that also involves regular coaching for teachers. This is well supported by the coaches for mathematics and science who are making a positive impact on the work in class. The opportunities for shared professional development and for modeling instruction, something all teachers are involved in is building capacity in the school.

The flexibility of the curriculum to create greater blocks of time for some activities is giving greater freedom, which along with opportunities for teachers to have common preparation time is bringing benefit to the planning and development of the curriculum scope and sequence. This also enables teachers to share data on, for example, mathematics and reading and set goals for students. This data is used to rank students so that comparisons can be made. Where improvements can be made are in further developing ways of calibrating students' work so that all teachers, regardless of grade level, have a common view on what constitutes each grade level and the skills students' need to reach these.

**Quality Statement 5: 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 school has some good procedures for evaluating students' progress and for identifying strengths, as well as weaknesses. However, not always does the alignment of the work sufficiently challenge the highest performers. Nevertheless, the improvements in English, mathematics and science provide strong evidence of the effectiveness of these procedures and their impact. For the lowest performers, diagnostic tests and assessments play a central part in this. However, it is also recognized that to identify students' progress more rigorously there needs to be continued emphasis on formative assessment.

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Curriculum development has been a particularly significant strategy for accelerating students' learning and progress. Mathematics work, including the 'Mathematics Month' and English, particularly reading, are all good examples. The administration has a clear goal of raising the bar: for example, by providing more rigor in science, but providing support for teachers and students through coaching while ensuring that there is support for those who might experience difficulties.

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### Part 4: Evaluation Criteria Grade Summary

<b>Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>
<p>1.1 The school uses available data (e.g., diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, students work products, standards-based portfolios, attendance, descriptive review, security data, etc.) and generates its own to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of how well each student, classroom, grade level, and other important categories of students and the school are:</p> <p>(1) currently performing, and (2) progressing over time, on English Language Arts, mathematics, and other important academic subjects.</p> <p>Criteria for measuring student progress are "objective" when they are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• standards-based,</li> <li>• consistent across students,</li> <li>• capable of revealing progress or a lack of it over time and ways to close the gap between current and expected practice,</li> </ul> <p>and when they allow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the performance of different students to be compared, and</li> <li>• learning activity to be broken down into component parts so strengths and weaknesses on each sub-activity may be identified.</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
<p>1.2 The school makes effective use of the data to assess the performance and progress of students by racial and ethnic groups, English Language Learners and special education students, and all other categories of interest to the school.</p> <p>{This criterion and the next are partially aspirational as of now. City and State Report Cards and Division of Accountability and Assessment reports provide only some of the necessary data. The NYC DOE will soon provide schools with fuller access to better data.}</p>			<b>X</b>
<p>1.3 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, racial and ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.</p>		<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 2: 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.</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>
<p>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 it develops plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.</p>			<b>X</b>
<p>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 warranting attention.</p>			<b>X</b>
<p>2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.</p>			<b>X</b>
<p>2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. That information is central to setting reasonably challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.</p>			<b>X</b>
<p>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</p>			<b>X</b>

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<b>Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with the school's high expectations and improvement plans and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals.			<b>X</b>
3.2 Decisions about the use of teacher and student time are based on the organization of the day and week needed to inform teachers about each student's performance and next learning steps, set goals and plans for improved student learning, and implement and continuously improve plans for reaching stated goals.			<b>X</b>
3.3 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			<b>X</b>
3.4 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			<b>X</b>
3.5 Teachers are accountable for student outcomes. 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.			<b>X</b>
3.6 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.			<b>X</b>
3.7 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		<b>X</b>	
3.8 Instructional programs actively engage students.			<b>X</b>
3.9 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		<b>X</b>	

<b>Quality Statement 4: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>
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.		<b>X</b>	
4.2 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.			<b>X</b>
4.3 Leaders, faculty, and staff share the same goals and frequently evaluate themselves, their interventions and each other's plans and interventions, including, when possible, by comparing outcomes across classrooms and schools. The school monitors its performance and tackles weaknesses. Even in areas where the school is successful, leadership is not complacent, but aims to improve further. The goal in all cases is to improve student and school performance and progress.			<b>X</b>
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results and revision of plans takes place in teams.		<b>X</b>	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			<b>X</b>
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear and are generally followed.			<b>X</b>

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Quality Statement 5: 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.	o	✓	+
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 reaching stated goals.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
5.3 Information generated by interim 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.			<b>X</b>
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive each successive phase of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve students' academic outcomes.			<b>X</b>