



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Herbert H. Lehman High School

High School 405

**3000 East Tremont Avenue
Bronx
NY 10461**

Principal: Robert Leder

Dates of review: March 10 - 12, 2008

Lead Reviewer: George Wallace

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Herbert H. Lehman has 4179 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 24% Black, 57% Hispanic, 12% White and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 8.7% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 57% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 83%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 61% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school runs smoothly and has a highly positive atmosphere for learning with students working in a safe, nurturing and respectful environment.
- Senior leaders and teachers analyze and use data very well to inform whole school strategic planning as well as departmental and lesson planning.
- Teaching consistently engages students who are responsive to the routines and demands made upon them by their teachers.
- The school is a strong learning community that subscribes to the philosophy of continuous improvement.
- Departments are well led and some of the processes used for improvement and development in several areas are excellent.
- The principal is highly respected, passionate about education and as a consequence, knows the staff and students very well.
- Senior leaders use effective techniques of evaluation to find out what staff and students value and what they dislike or feel could be improved.
- The professional development program is broad, relevant and meets both teachers' professional needs and those of the school.
- The school provides students with an extremely comprehensive and interesting curriculum covering a wide range of subjects including very good arts and sports programs.
- New staff are very well supported through a formal induction program with weekly meetings together with support from their mentor and assistant principals.

What the school needs to improve

- Analyze data effectively to compare outcomes with similar schools and take action where necessary.
- Continue work on strategies to improve attendance and to reduce the numbers of students coming to school late.
- Sharpen departmental approaches to improvement planning so that all departments adopt best practice for identifying goals and for implementing procedures to review them.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

This very large school runs extremely smoothly. Student relationships with their peers and with adults are generally excellent. Students collaborate well and benefit from teaching methods that are often highly engaging. They are always involved in ensuring that they understand the lesson aims. Teachers' questioning skills are good and they successfully differentiate students' work which leads to them being responsive to the many challenges presented. The school provides a highly positive atmosphere for learning with students working in a safe, nurturing and respectful environment.

Staff collaboration is high. New teachers are very well supported and are enthusiastic about teaching. The principal, who is very highly respected, is ably supported by assistant principals who, together with the whole school community, are committed to continuous improvement. Teachers have high expectations of students' learning. Assistant principals lead very large teams of staff and, in different ways for different subjects, employ a wide range of effective strategies to improve teaching and learning. For example, in math, teachers with very high quality teaching skills lead successful professional development, and departmental self-evaluation is also strong. In English, consultants are used to speed up the process of course evaluation and revision and in physical education knowledge of the wide range of students' interests leads to more new courses being developed, for example, cricket, skiing and rock climbing.

The use of data analysis is strong at all levels. However, pattern analysis, while in place in some areas of the school, is still developing in other areas. Over the past few years the lower than expected grade 9 promotion rates has meant that large numbers of freshman have been held over. This pattern has never been fully explored until now and consequently the school recognizes that it raises questions over the efficacy of the school's strategies for improvement in this area. Measurable time-related whole school goals are clear and known in departments. However, there is inconsistency across departments in the way they evaluate and present their improvement plans. Teachers are efficient in tracking student performance and use this information to improve student outcomes. The inquiry team has wisely identified grade 9 holdover students as a research area. Their work has led to a wide range of support procedures, some already evaluated and modified with new mechanisms introduced. The program is beginning to show that it is having some positive impact on students' commitment to learning. The school curriculum is extremely broad and interesting for students. Attendance is low although slowly improving. Guidance is strong and through the house system most students build up strong supportive relations with one guidance counselor. Partnerships with other organizations are extensive, including the recently established Montefiore Medical Centre for the students. There were six areas for the school to improve at the last Quality Review. Four are fully in place and two advanced towards completion.

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 the student's progress over time.

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

The school collects a wide range of very useful performance and progress data on all students. Teachers know the individual education plan targets for special education students and most plan accordingly. Up-to-date information and data are gathered and analyzed on English language learners. Although there are self-contained English language learner classes with specialist teachers, many subjects ensure that specific teachers are well equipped with skills to ensure that those English language learners in general education classes are very well supported.

All data is continually updated so that teachers have an accurate understanding of student' progress. In addition, assistant principals who lead subject departments know the patterns and trends of student progress by both grade and class. All departments use this data well, and in some cases the tracking and use is exemplary. For example, in most departments an evaluation of students' preferred learning styles is undertaken so that teachers target students well. In others, a full analysis of specific elements of the course, such as a freshman with very poor skills in mental math, has led to significant changes in approach to teaching to ensure this lifelong skill in math computation is learnt. Teachers use formal tests and teacher assessments well. Their item analysis is good. In several areas of the school, including whole school work, the interpretation of patterns within data is good in places and elsewhere is in its infancy.

The school knows its past performance and is able to explain differences in trends in many areas of the curriculum. However, it is rare that any serious comparison with other schools' performance data occurs. The school has done much in the area of training staff in data analysis. This is a whole school priority and departments have put their own stamp on the importance of such training to aid teachers' lesson planning.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Senior leaders collaborate well to identify whole school goals and share them effectively with staff. There is an expectation that assistant principals will take these to their departments to discuss the implications with their staff. In writing departmental improvement plans, however, there is no consistency of interpretation of the school goals or specific subject goals or a commonly agreed format. However, each department provides a strong focus on the work of individual students as well as assistant principals frequently assessing student performance by grade.

Assessment outcomes across departments ensure that specific groups of students receive special support to aid their progress and performance. In most cases the school

is effective in giving attention to students in greatest need of improvement. However, while there was a recognition of the urgency to address the needs of grade 9 students because of the large number of holdovers, a significant aspect of credit accumulation was overlooked.

Staff expectations of student performance are high. Throughout the school there is a common approach to the structure of lessons that involves students in their learning. Students are also set challenging goals, which are more formalized and effectively used in some departments than others. The English department uses student goal setting very well. Parents are very content with the amount and quality of information they receive including frequent feedback on their child's progress. Parents also indicate that contacting the school is easy, welcome and information acted upon.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

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

Throughout the school there is a strong focus on student learning. All departments generate meaningful interim data which is used to good effect. The math department in particular is exceptional in its collection and use of highly relevant student and staff survey data. The curriculum is extremely broad and contains an extraordinary wide range of subjects. Within individual subject areas there are a variety of programs offered together with teachers adopting interesting ways of teaching them. There are also extra-curricular activities as well as a house system that encourages a sense of belonging and in doing so frequently arranges trips and activities.

Teachers know they are accountable for students' learning and they prepare well for their teaching. Teachers meet frequently to share good practice and discuss ways of enhancing their work for all students. This is a safe and inclusive school but some strategies for ensuring that attendance is high are not fully effective. Teachers use data well to plan lessons. They know students' preferred learning styles as well as their past performance so that work is differentiated to meet their needs. The budget is used effectively and where money may be tight in a department the assistant principals work collaboratively to ensure needs are met. The culture of this very large school promotes a quite extraordinary level of mutual trust and respect between different students and students and adults. The principal is very well respected and knows his staff and students extremely well. They know him and greet him with a friendship and reverence at changeover times as well as those times he visits classrooms.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

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

The principal and assistant principals visits large numbers of lessons. Teachers receive feedback and assistant principals, in particular, use such observations to target professional development in their subjects. Professional development is very well

managed. Teachers receive a menu of training programs so that internal professional development is strong and uses well the skills of existing staff. Increasingly, assistant principals draw on the expertise of colleagues in other subjects and teachers value inter-visitations between departments as well as in their own subject area. Good practice seen during these inter-visitations is shared with colleagues. New teachers receive very effective support which includes active weekly professional development meetings. They are also supported by a mentor and by their assistant principal. The attention to detail to ensure pedagogical development is very strong.

Youth development and guidance, although part of the departmental structure is the mainstay of the house system. Here counselors and key staff work with students to generate a sense of belonging to a relatively small “family” in an extremely large school. Students indicate that the house system works and the level of guidance and collegiality is quite strong. The school runs very smoothly and the various systems of support for students are effective and operate in a strong nurturing and caring environment. Those students who wish to do well at school can excel beyond expectations. There are very good partnerships with various academic, social and sporting organizations.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

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

The school has clear time related and measurable goals developed by the administration and known by staff. The cabinet periodically evaluates these goals while maintaining a watching brief on the school’s progress towards them. Departments also have documented annual plans which vary in quality. Teachers have goals and as a reflective practitioners they frequently evaluate where they are in relation to these. Some departments provide exemplary feedback arising from subject specific surveys concerning their strengths and areas for improvement.

At the same time, student performance is tracked by the administration and this, together with good use of survey results of students’ feelings about the school contribute strongly to interim evaluations. Consequently, changes are made to strategies and lead to revisions to plans. The link between the formal aspects of using such outcomes to identify clear goals for department improvement planning is more varied in quality than for whole school planning. The latter is well developed through the work of the administration led by the principal. However, each assistant principal, whether a departmental leader or not, is part of a large group that works well together in the pursuit of continuous school improvement. The principal is an enthusiast who is passionate about good quality education for the students and works tirelessly to this end.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SCHOOL NAME: Herbert H. Lehman High School | Δ | ▷ | ✓ | + | ◇ |
| Quality Score | | | | X | |

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

| To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . . | Δ | ▷ | ✓ | + | ◇ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level? | | | | X | |
| 1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students? | | | | X | |
| 1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners? | | | | X | |
| 1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school? | | | | X | |
| 1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas? | | | | X | |
| 1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools? | | | X | | |
| 1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students? | | | | X | |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 1 | | | | X | |

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

| To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . . | Δ | ▷ | ✓ | + | ◇ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals? | | | X | | |
| 2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement? | | | X | | |
| 2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students? | | | | X | |
| 2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers? | | | | X | |
| 2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve? | | | X | | |
| 2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children? | | | | X | |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 2 | | | X | | |

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

| To what extent does the school . . . | Δ | ▷ | ✓ | + | ◇ |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students? | | | | X | |
| 3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day? | | | | | X |
| 3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment? | | | | X | |
| 3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge? | | | | X | |
| 3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students? | | | | X | |
| 3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development? | | | | | X |
| 3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness? | | | X | | |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 3 | | | | X | |

| Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student. | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| To what extent does the school . . . | Δ | ➤ | ✓ | + | ◇ |
| 4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction? | | | | X | |
| 4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers? | | | | X | |
| 4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment? | | | | X | |
| 4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school? | | | | X | |
| 4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals? | | | | X | |
| 4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents? | | | | X | |
| 4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students? | | | | X | |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 4 | | | | | X |

| Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning. | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| To what extent do . . . | Δ | ➤ | ✓ | + | ◇ |
| 5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments? | | | | X | |
| 5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments? | | | | X | |
| 5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas? | | | | X | |
| 5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals? | | | | X | |
| 5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes? | | | | X | |
| 5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning? | | | X | | |
| 5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change? | | | | X | |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 5 | | | | | X |

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|---|--|
| ◇ | Outstanding |
| + | Well Developed |
| ✓ | Proficient |
| ➤ | Underdeveloped with Proficient Features |
| Δ | Underdeveloped |