



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Harriet Tubman Learning Center**

**Public School 154  
250 West 127 Street  
New York  
NY 10027**

**Principal: Elizabeth Jarrett**

**Dates of review: December 8 - 11, 2006**

**Reviewer: Amanda Whitehead**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Harriet Tubman Learning Center is an elementary school in central Harlem. The school serves students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school's student population is made up of 85% Black students, 10% Hispanic students and 5% students from other ethnic backgrounds. There are approximately 20% English language learners, a higher proportion than in similar and City schools. At 9%, the proportion of special education students is smaller than other similar and City schools. The school receives Title 1 funding.

Attendance is 92% which is broadly the same as similar and City schools.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school uses data well to identify and plan for the needs of individuals, groups and grades.
- The school's environment is safe and promotes a culture that values everyone's contribution.
- Parental and community involvement help the school reach its goals.
- The principal monitors and evaluates the school's effectiveness well.
- Students' enjoyment of school is reflected in their positive behavior, regular attendance and good attentiveness in lessons.
- Professional development effectively supports the needs of individual teachers and the school's priorities for improvement.
- The school's expectations of students' conduct and academic achievements result in hard-working students who want to do well.

### What the school needs to improve

- Establish collaborative procedures for setting measurable end-of-year school, class and grade goals for individuals and groups of students, especially ethnic and gender groups, in English language arts, mathematics and science.
- Ensure teachers consistently follow the school's agreed procedures in planning the curriculum and differentiating instruction for all students in their classes.
- Schedule more regular opportunities for teachers to work together to plan and to evaluate and share best practice.
- Develop further strategies to retain teaching staff.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school.**

This is a happy and caring school. The principal has a clear and shared vision for the school's continuing development. The staff are pleased to be working in the school and parents say they are always made to feel welcome. Students enjoy school and so most attend every day. Members of the strong administration team support and monitor teaching and learning effectively.

The school has high expectations for all and these are shared with parents. As yet these high expectations have not been reached. Assessment in the school is rigorous although it is more consistent in some grades, and with some teachers, than with others. The curriculum is rich and varied both during the school day and outside school hours and is an area that the parents find particularly appealing.

### 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 proficient.**

The school collects a wide range of assessment information and test data to gain a secure knowledge and understanding of each student's performance and progress, by class and grade in English language arts and mathematics. Data is analyzed closely to identify students who are at risk of not reaching grade standards so their progress can be monitored more specifically. The school has also identified and is promoting a program for gifted and talented students who are capable of exceeding grade standards. In addition, teachers carry out their own assessments that give a range of information about all students. Some, but not all, teachers keep the assessments in a binder so they can refer to the information easily during lessons and planning meetings.

The administration team regularly discusses and compares data in order to track the progress of individual students within each class and grade level. This system tends to track how much progress students have made rather than looking at whether they have made enough progress because goals are not linked closely enough to students' expected end-of-year performance. The school gathers, analyzes and compares data by ethnicity and gender only as part of its overall data collection for individual students. While it looks closely at individual students in these groups who are not reaching grade standards, it has only just started to look at the performance and progress of these groupings to try to find patterns, for example why Black American boys do less well than other groups in some grades and subjects.

**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 proficient.**

This data is used to give focus for student and school goals, often set collaboratively at grade meetings. The administration team works well together to set the school’s overall goals and to devise action plans as to how these goals will be met. Data is used to identify certain aspects of subjects that require further attention and appropriate goals are set. However, although they have the overall target that all students will reach grade standards, they do not have a measure precisely linked to students’ expected end-of-year performance based on individual or group data.

The principal shares the information with staff at team planning meetings. However, some teams plan more collaboratively than others as to how class instruction and the curriculum will help to reach those goals. While most teachers use assessment information effectively to set individual student and class goals, others do not.

The school focuses appropriately on students who need extra help to learn, including special education students, English language learners and those at risk of not meeting grade standards. The school has a clear system, down to skill level, of identifying students that require intervention and support at any level. Goals in formal individualized education plans outline the small steps students need to take to improve learning and accelerate progress.

Where individual goals are set, students are clear what they are and what they need to do to achieve them. Parents appreciate the school’s challenging expectations. They regularly receive updates about their children’s progress, through a report card and formal meetings with teachers. Parents know how they can support their children’s progress and always feel welcome in school to discuss with teacher how they can support learning at home.

**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 proficient.**

The school has thought very carefully about how it uses the data to help to align instruction for all pupils. For example, using the Everyday Mathematics program, teachers pinpoint specific skills that students need more help with and ensure these are a focus of their curriculum planning. All teachers know they are accountable for students’ performance and progress. Some, but not all, teachers use data well to organize learning, group students and target individuals for one-on-one conferencing. There is not enough scheduled time for teachers to plan in teams to evaluate and share practice and improve the way they all use data to align instruction to the full range of learners’ needs in classes.

The school plans curriculum opportunities that meet mandated requirements and are accessible to all students. Teachers plan activities that are relevant and meet students’ varied and diverse interests. As a result, students are engaged in lessons and nearly always attentive.

Budget, staffing and scheduling decisions are based on the school's identified areas of need, such as establishing the teacher resource room which contains leveled books for literacy to support students who need the most help. The school ensures staff are scheduled to support students who need extra help in lessons. Scheduling for mathematics and literacy has been carefully planned across the grades to enable an equal amount of support from the mathematics and literacy coaches for all classes.

The school's systems for monitoring and encouraging regular attendance are rigorously and consistently followed. If students are absent, the school telephones parents and on occasions when there is particular concern, home visits are made.

The school knows and respects students and gives good guidance on how students can do as well as they can. Students know the school's rules and expectations and respond well to the routines. This is reflected in good behavior during lessons. Students feel able to approach a particular member of staff for advice and help, and to discuss any concerns.

**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 proficient.**

The school has a mix of well-established and newly-qualified teachers. When hiring new staff, it attempts to determine how effectively candidates use data, to ensure that appointments meet the needs of the school and students. However, this is not always possible. Every two years, the school loses some teachers who work temporarily at the school under the America's Choice program to go to other schools in the area. This constant turnover of staff creates challenges for the school in ensuring continuity of quality and practice.

Professional development takes many forms including attending conferences and workshops organized by external bodies, in-house support and training, and using experienced teachers as buddies or mentors. Teachers have started to reflect on their personal training needs. The school's professional development team monitors the impact of training and in particular how teachers use data to align instruction with student needs.

Teachers have some opportunity to meet as teams to plan and evaluate practice. However, there is too little opportunity to reflect fully on their own and each others' practice by visiting classes and sharing ideas on how to align instruction to the range of students' performance and learning needs.

The principal and assistant principals visit classes on a regular basis to evaluate the quality of teaching and bring about improvement in the quality of students' learning. Procedures and communications are good and so the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

The principal is well respected by the community, parents, staff and students and has the capacity to effect change. In addition to the services provided by the academic intervention services team, the school has been fortunate in drawing upon community support. For example, the senior citizen tutoring program promotes one-on-one tutoring for reading skills, which is having a positive impact on the reading levels of the students that are involved. The Harlem Children's Zone and America Reads effectively support the

school's extended-day programs. The Saturday academy enables students to work individually and in groups on their literacy and mathematics skills.

**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 proficient.**

Interim goals for learning are monitored closely through a range of assessments to evaluate the school's programs and action plans. When it is apparent that goals are not being met, administration, coaches and teachers revise their plans and make adjustments to the curriculum and instructional programs to address the issues identified. Interim goals for special education students are checked regularly to help the school monitor the effectiveness of its support and intervention programs. However, because the school's overall goals lack measurable criteria, the school is not yet able to monitor whether it is on track to reach its end-of-year goals. It measures how far it has reached rather than whether it has reached far enough.

The administration team has a clear overview of progress within and across classes, and uses this knowledge to evaluate progress of action plans. As yet it does not always share all of the information with all teachers. The school carries out a well-focused analysis of data to identify whether students have gaps in knowledge and weaker skills in some subjects in comparison with another. The information is shared at grade meetings. However, teachers in some grades use the information more effectively than others to plan learning that will help fill the gaps in knowledge and improve students' weaker skills. The principal and assistant principals do not always follow through by making sure that agreed procedures are followed by all teachers.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Harriet Tubman Learning Center (PS 154)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>		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"> <li>• ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>		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"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>		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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		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.

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<b>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.</b>	Ø	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>		X	
<b>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.</b>	Ø	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>		X	
<b>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.</b>	Ø	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X	