



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

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Reviewer: Stephanie Krusa

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Information about the school

Herbert H. Lehman is one of the largest comprehensive high schools in the City with over 4,300 students and roughly 430 administrators, teachers and support staff. The current principal has led the school for 28 years. The student body is ethnically diverse with 57% Hispanic, 24% Black, 12% White and 6% Asian. Roughly 8% of the enrolled students are English language learners, and almost 11% are special education students. The school qualifies for the Title 1 funding this year. At 85%, attendance is on a par with similar schools and above the City high school average.

The school is organized into houses, each headed by an assistant principal and with a full-time guidance counselor. All houses include grades 9 through 12, except for two which are organized specifically for 9th graders who require support in transitioning to a high school setting, or have performed poorly in middle school. Other themed houses include the Academic Center for Enrichment for students with individual education plans and International House for English language learners. Additionally there are eight houses for the various disciplines as well as the Honors Academy for high-achieving students.

The building, which is shared with two small theme-based high schools, is very well maintained. Campus facilities include a spacious library, fine and performing arts rooms, auditorium, gymnasiums and playing fields. Classrooms and labs are technologically well equipped.

The school partners with local colleges and universities including Lehman College, Bronx Community College, City University of New York, Polytechnic University and the Fordham Law School. Community partners include Einstein-Weiler Hospital, the Justice Resource Center and Computer Associates.

As an empowerment school, Herbert H. Lehman has 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. This school is currently engaged in a research project to design its own periodic assessment materials.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is well respected and maintains strong relationships with students and staff.
- The climate is excellent throughout, providing students with a safe, nurturing and respectful learning environment.
- The school is effectively structured into houses based on students' interests and needs, offering them personal support and interaction.
- Students are engaged and readily discuss their learning.
- High expectations for staff are communicated through daily informal classroom visits and immediate feedback by administrators.
- The school has excellent arts, enrichment and sports programs to address student interests.
- The school offers many academic and alternative programs designed to enable students to graduate.
- The staff is highly collegial, providing excellent in-house support for each other through modeling, mentoring and co-teaching in departments.

What the school needs to improve

- Build on existing practices to extend collection and analysis of data across the school to support more effective goal-setting and planning.
- Continue to strive for new ways to organize data to pinpoint instructional needs of students who require additional support.
- Support students' ability to self-monitor learning by engaging them in setting, reviewing and revising goals.
- Increase communication across departments, and develop inter-visitations with sister schools to build capacity to improve achievement.
- Establish interim goals for components of the Comprehensive Education Plan to facilitate ongoing assessment toward progress, and to revise plans if necessary
- Further develop plans for informing parents' understanding about school programs and involving them in their children's education.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

Lehman High School provides a very calm and stable learning environment for its students and staff. The organizational structure ensures that every student makes personal connections to key staff and has a cohort of peers to learn with. As each freshman class enters, great care is taken to absorb them in to the culture of the school, characterized by mutually respectful relationships and responsible scholarship.

Teachers benefit from collegial sharing, and professional development opportunities that reflect their needs and those of students. The curriculum is rich, and supplemented by a good range of extra-curricular activities. Finally, a number of community partners and institutions of higher learning enhance the curriculum and provide students with many early college and career experiences.

The work in developing the school's own interim assessment program is well under way. Several houses effectively gather and use data. However, this is not uniformly developed across houses, and needs strengthening. The school is also developing capacity to set goals and measure progress, most significantly, for lower-performing students. This is acknowledged to be a key focus across all departments.

The real strength of the school is the quality of relationships between teachers and students and among staff members. Everyone, under the leadership of a dynamic principal, works tirelessly to maintain a positive environment that inspires learning. High expectations are in place for all students and staff. Teachers thrive in this community and seek to provide students with every opportunity to achieve. All resources are aligned to this purpose.

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.

Students' needs and interests are carefully considered when house assignments are made. Some houses excel in using data to monitor student progress for each student, classroom and grade over time. For example, in one department, a lead teacher, whose results are consistently excellent across all student groups, implements model lessons ahead of his peers, who then implement the same lesson. Daily classes end with a quick assessment to summarize individual student learning. Teachers gather weekly to compare results and plan next steps with the lead teacher. However, this level of analysis of student progress and classroom practices is not uniform across departments. The use of data to guide instruction is not yet an integral part of teachers' practice across the school. The school has identified the need to more effectively analyze student learning thereby identifying strengths and weaknesses of student and teacher performances. This is an accurate and appropriate self-assessment.

The school has not yet established a systemic, ongoing process for data analysis for students and groups which leads into alignment of instructional practice, particularly for those in need of additional support. The result is clearly seen in the June 2006 accountability record showing subgroup performance, in which special education students and English language learners fell short of expected targets in both English language arts and mathematics. To begin addressing the lack of consistency in data collection and use, key staff have designed an electronic database from which highly specific in-house reports can be generated. This is best seen in daily reports on school and class attendance for every student, which assist monitoring these key components. The system also provides a picture of behavior issues, and academic records such as credit accumulation, but is not yet widely shared with relevant staff.

Student progress is compared across classes in each house or discipline, but cross-campus comparisons are not routinely done. The school is not yet working with similar schools to understand how its students are progressing in relation to others. The analysis of performance of groups of students by ethnicity and gender is not routinely carried out to ensure that the school does equally well with all its students.

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.

There is a well established process in place for long-range planning, reflected in the Comprehensive Education Plan. This document outlines broad strokes toward annual goals for each house, with ongoing planning continuing throughout the year, directed by each assistant principal. Planning is extremely effective in some houses with weekly student assessments used to review and revise interim goals. This process is not perfected in all houses, however, reflecting a need to share planning and ideas, school-wide, in support of systemic best practices, impacting on all students. Additionally, in all houses, staff need to use student data to establish measurable interim goals, aligned with the Comprehensive Education Plan, to better evaluate progress. At present, measurable goals are not used enough to engage students in self-monitoring their learning and partnering with teachers to review and revise goals.

Goals and plans focus on the whole school and on all groups, particularly students who need additional support, although results for some groups reflect a need to review and strengthen some measures. For example, every year a high percentage of incoming freshmen struggle to adjust to the culture and rigors of high school. Many innovative programs are in place at Lehman to support this cohort, yet credit accumulation for 9th grade students is significantly below that of City and similar schools. The school has firm plans in place to address this including a summer bridge program offering credits for incoming freshmen and a summer academy offering credit-bearing courses to 9th graders in danger of retention.

Staff uniformly convey high expectations to students and parents for academic performance, attendance and behavior. Despite the school’s efforts, some parents remain hard to reach. All staff, supported by commonly understood high standards, are engaged in improving student performance, in a highly collegial way. A good example is the Gateway Institute for Pre-College Education. This resource -rich science program is

offered to minority and female students interested in careers in medicine and engineering. Student results after two years show steady gains in achievement, particularly in chemistry. Students in this cohort maintain conditions of a personal contract and work toward set targets which adjust with learning.

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's curriculum, in each department, is mapped and fully aligns with City and State standards and formal assessment requirements. Students are offered a full range of Regents and advanced placement courses, extra curricular activities and more than 20 athletic teams.

The house structure enables each department to carefully focus on planning and all teachers are held accountable for student achievement. In houses where ongoing assessment is integrated in instruction, differentiation more effectively matches student needs. However, ongoing formative assessment and carefully nuanced differentiation are not uniformly practiced, and both need strengthening in some houses. There are excellent models in place, and many assistant principals among this highly collegial staff to support this work. Teachers would like to see more sharing of practices across departments, to enhance collaboration among departments and cross-pollinate ideas and strategies.

The school spending plan provides students with an impressive array of academic, enrichment, sports and support programs, all geared to boosting achievement for all students, with particular emphasis on students needing extra support. Staffing decisions also reflect student needs. This is seen in two recent moves designed to support at-risk 9th grade students, the hiring of additional guidance staff and pairing of seasoned teachers to work with this cohort. Student data drives scheduling decisions. For example, to accommodate needs, the school provides double block periods for major subjects, offers a range of extended-day, Saturday, evening and summer programs for students trying to accumulate sufficient credits for graduation. There is also a specially designed program offering eight terms of mathematics and six of foreign language for students aspiring to Regents diplomas with advanced designations.

Students are focused and engaged throughout the school, enjoy being in school and are quick to discuss plans for college. They feel teachers are supportive and available for academic and personal questions. One of the greatest strengths of the school is the level of respect and attention given each student by the principal and the entire staff. This promotes a school environment highly conducive to learning. The school has an effective policy for monitoring attendance, which is on a par with similar schools and above the City average.

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.

Prospective teachers are screened for such qualities as scholarship, commitment to student achievement, personal learning goals and stamina. As part of the interview process, they perform tasks to demonstrate content knowledge and are given clear expectations about responsibilities. If hired, they are expected to fully participate in data analysis and compare student outcomes in classrooms and across the school, and to adjust plans, if warranted.

Extensive professional development occurs in departments and reflects both the needs of staff and that indicated by student data. Teachers' individual improvement plans, aligned with Comprehensive Education Plan goals, inform formal classroom observations. Experienced teachers mentor new staff, who are further supported by ongoing inter-visitations and weekly house meetings which serve to build common understanding about best practices. During these meetings, the team focuses on student progress, planning, ongoing assessment and curriculum revision. Teachers do not have opportunities to visit across houses, nor is there an inter-visitation program with similar schools, missing opportunities to bring in fresh ideas and further develop experienced staff and administrators who do so much to mentor others. The principal teams daily with two or three assistant principals to visit all classrooms in each of their houses. Following department visits, they debrief and assistant principals give teachers immediate feedback and provide any necessary follow up. By week's end, all departments have been seen. This ongoing process effectively provides every teacher and all assistant principals with clear parameters for instructional practices, and firm guidelines for improvement.

The principal is well respected as the leader who implemented the house system 28 years ago. Every teacher but two has been hired by him. Every aspect of the school's programs is his handiwork, which is impressive in this high-functioning and well-run institution. Student support services align with the academic, social and emotional needs of students and are supported by strong community partnerships, also developed by the principal.

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.

The school has established structures for evaluating student progress throughout the year, but use of diagnostic assessments is not sufficiently developed in all departments. This impacts on the ability to evaluate learning and plan appropriately for many students. Additionally, some groups require closer analysis. All departments compare student progress across classrooms, but not with other schools, to determine the extent of student learning in each, and to flexibly adjust instruction for improved results in the future. All relevant information is used in an ongoing process to revise plans and modify goals, although the pool and quality of information is more developed in some houses than in others. Interim and final assessment results are used to set new goals and plans for student improvement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Herbert H. Lehman High School (HS 405)	∅	✓	+
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	