



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Harvey Milk High School

High School 586

**2 Astor Place
New York
NY 10003**

Principal: Alan Nolan

Dates of review: March 3 - 4, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Ted Solow

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Information about the school

Harvey Milk High School is a high school with 100 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 38% Black, 49% Hispanic, 8% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 75.9%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 68% eligibility.

The Harvey Milk School is a transfer high school for students who have not met with academic success at other City high schools. The school's partner, The Hetrick-Martin Institute, provides many extracurricular and counseling services in support of the students in order to improve their academic, social and emotional outcomes.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school focuses strongly on academic, emotional and social success by using collaborative team goal setting to ensure that students achieve and graduate in a timely fashion.
- The principal provides excellent leadership and fosters an atmosphere of collegiality among all staff enabling them to assist one another.
- Technology is used well to create dynamic lessons and as well students are actively engaged and challenged through differentiated learning activities.
- Staff effectively uses data to drive the instructional program.
- The school is orderly and smoothly administered where students are well known and supported and high levels of mutual trust and respect are encouraged.
- The budget is effectively managed and staffing, resources and scheduling decisions support the needs of the students.
- The halls and classrooms are decorated with rich attractive displays of student work demonstrating the high expectations of the school.
- Effective youth development services meet the social, emotional and personal needs of the students.
- Many occasions are made to convey high expectations for students through parent meetings, open school events as well as one to one mentoring.
- Art, theater, dance and fashion design provide high quality opportunities for self-expression and creativity in support of the academic program.

What the school needs to improve

- Further disaggregate data to better understand effects of cultural sensitivity on learning and in particular the performance and progress of ethnic and gender groups.
- Create a schedule of classroom observations and establish other means in order to focus on improving subject area instruction as well as to strengthen leadership capacity.
- Create an interim reporting system to keep parents fully informed of their children's short-term progress towards goals.

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 proficient.

The high quality academic program at The Harvey Milk School fosters a community of successful independent learners in a safe, supportive environment that focuses on high expectations. The newly appointed principal, formerly the assistant principal, is a strong educational leader who guides a collaborative team of dedicated teachers and support staff. The staff focuses its efforts on academic subjects to ensure that students accumulate credits and graduate in a timely fashion. Staff gathers and analyzes data to develop differentiated, engaging and challenging learning experiences for their students. However, data is not used sufficiently to gain a better understanding of the achievement and progress of ethnic and gender groups of students. Currently, there is no formal schedule of class observations to focus on continued improvement of instruction and to expand the leadership capacity in the school. Technology is infused into all subject areas, assisting and motivating the students to achieve. The high quality arts program supports the academic program and provides many opportunities, both during and after school, for creativity and self-expression.

The school has made good progress in addressing significant areas to improve from the previous Quality Review. Attendance procedures are in place to track daily attendance and lateness and make home contacts during the school day. An incentive program that recognizes good attendance is now in place with targeted groups showing dramatic improvement. Staff uses data to develop specific measurable goals that support the procedures outlined in the school's Comprehensive Education Plan. All teachers differentiate their instruction to meet the varied learning styles and grade levels of a diverse group of 17 to 21 year old students. There is now an individualized educational plan in place for every student, which the staff members review during weekly conferences. The school keeps parents aware of student progress through regular report cards but in the short term, between the reporting cycles, they are not so consistently well informed.

The inquiry team is in place and plans to train the staff in the use of the Department of Education computer programs before the end of the school year. The team is currently monitoring the progress of 20 students with academic and attendance issues.

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 proficient.

Teachers are adept at analyzing assessment data to better inform their instructional practices and improve student achievement in each subject class. The staff uses data effectively to raise performance levels, as well to understand the areas of mastery of all students. The principal and staff meet weekly to review a broad range of data from many sources, including student attendance and lateness, individual student progress, and subject-class, and cohort performance. Analysis of data from Regents exams, periodic assessments, subject-class performance and individual projects clearly show which students are accumulating credits and those who are struggling. Such regular assessments of all students, including special education students, allow staff members to monitor individual performance and progress. At this time, specific monitoring of ethnic and gender groups is not in place and this makes more difficult to improve any weaknesses as trends are not identified from data. The principal regularly reviews Regents examination results, report cards, student attendance, and reports from staff and support staff meetings, to compare all components of the current school performance with its past. Data indicates that the school is making steady progress and is performing at a higher level than similar transfer high schools. Because of consistent academic and guidance efforts, the pass rate, graduation and college acceptances have risen to new heights.

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.

The staff meets weekly to review their subject-class goals and instructional plans. Curricular planning delineates periods for reaching stated goals and assists in the preparation of rigorous, challenging and differentiated learning activities. Staff also discusses student performance and progress in subject classes, attendance and lateness and the ways in which students deal with their social and emotional issues. Advisors meet with students daily for 45 minutes to identify those who are struggling and to develop an academic-assistance plan with staff, parents and the student themselves. Advisors proceed through the grades with those students for their entire school career. Struggling students receive targeted services during the school day, in the extended day and during mandated after-school tutoring sessions. The academic-assistance team provides good reviews of student progress every five weeks to assess attainment levels and the need for any intervention.

The school shares its goals for student progress with all members of the school community during intake sessions with new students and at orientation sessions. Sharing of information relating to school goals and high expectations for students takes place at parent meetings, open school events and at meetings with the school's partner. The school does not uniformly inform parents about progress between report card cycles. Staff reinforces high expectations and academic rigor by demanding high-quality

performance levels from their students. Because of the intensity of staff-student involvement, no one falls through the cracks at this school. Additionally, the counseling staff provides good on-demand guidance services, to help students cope with social and emotional issues both during and after the school day. An important aspect of this school is the one-on-one mentoring the principal conducts with each student, reviewing accomplishments and encouraging future academic and social successes.

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 proficient.

The school’s curriculum focuses on a manageable range of concepts and themes in each core curriculum area, allowing for greater in-depth study of content and skills development, and addressing the varied capability levels and learning styles of the students. The skillfully employed “Learning to Learn” program, infused across each subject area, gives students the opportunity to improve their skills in reading, writing, numeracy and critical thinking. An important component of the program is student preparation of self-reflections that serve as an evaluation of their own learning, progress and academic needs. Additionally, there are project-based learning and assessment activities in developing a literacy magazine, poetry and film documentaries. These activities are part of the school’s good basic curriculum philosophy. Staff uses technology well to support and enhance student learning and provide additional motivation. The broad, engaging curriculum is a result of collaborative teams reviewing data from attendance, academic progress, transcript reviews for credit accumulation, Regents exam results, observations and conversations with students. The arts, compliments well the academic program through elective courses in music, dance, visual arts, theater, and fashion design and food presentation. Their partner, the Hetrick-Martin Institute, supports many in-school and after-school activities.

The principal holds teachers accountable for student progress by monitoring lesson preparation plans, engagement level of the students, and observed differentiation of instructional activities. Student performance levels on periodic assessments and Regents exams are also used to gauge accountability. Students are active participants in their learning. They clearly articulate personal attainment goals and the steps to achieve success in classes. The principal is a highly effective manager and makes good use of all resources to meet student needs. This year the school is underwriting all graduation expenses and scheduling academically related field trips to historical sites in the City. There is a high level of mutual respect among staff, parents and students. Students rely on and trust staff that advise, counsel and tutor at any time before, during and after school. Bonds of mutual trust and respect are a hallmark of the school. Several students voiced the following, “This school is our second family”.

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 proficient.

The principal visits classes daily to observe the quality of instruction, student engagement, differentiation of materials and instructional activities, and use of data to

support student learning. Staff members receive constructive and timely feedback following all visits. There is no schedule for formal observations of teaching and no alternative to formal observations in order to expand leadership capacity. Professional development activities focus on refining classroom management structures and practices to support a high-risk student population. Staff members receive good training in integrating technology, 'backwards' planning, differentiation of instruction and leading an advisory group in order to improve their classroom instruction. Staff members attend citywide conferences and share their findings at the weekly staff meetings. The principal encourages and supports peer intervisitations across the school. Two new staff members are well supported by mentors, coaches and support staff. Staff members meet weekly to share good practices, assess and analyze data, monitor and address students' academic, social, emotional, personal needs including quality of life concerns.

The school's handbook outlines the qualities it takes to be a successful Harvey Milk High School student. The safe, secure and orderly environment, which is highly conducive to education and exhibited through the student and staff mutual respect, enables the students to be themselves within the school environment.

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 proficient.

The school leadership team, a collaborative group representing staff, parents, and students, assists the principal in developing measurable goals, objectives and targets in each instructional area. These goals, along with the principal's personal objectives, clearly outline prescribed procedures for evaluation of progress toward goal attainment with benchmarks, targets and interim timeframes. Staff effectively analyzes data from a variety of formal and informal sources to make informed decisions relating to the needs of individual students and whole-class performance. These as well as progress in academic areas are subjected to revisions and subsequent amendments to strategic plans. The principal and staff regularly review and assess student data to measure levels of achievement and to prepare for the next steps. The staff, after consultation with the principal and service providers, is empowered to review periodic assessment outcomes, adjust timeframes and revise goals to meet student expectations and personal needs.

The principal and members of the school community have a clear and unified vision for the future of the school. These include embracing all students through fostering high expectations in a safe, secure and nurturing environment whilst challenging students to redirect and apply their educational desires to achieve success through regular school attendance, accumulation of credits, graduation in a timely fashion and continuation of education at the college level. It is this that drives the Harvey Milk School community.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Harvey Milk 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		

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