

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**Herbert H. Lehman High School**

**High School 405**

**3000 East Tremont Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10461**

**Principal: Dr. Janet Saraceno**

**Dates of review: April 21 - 23, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Cheryll C. Jones**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Herbert H. Lehman is a secondary high school with 4303 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 23% Black, 61% Hispanic, 10% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 38% English language learners and 38% special education students. Boys account for 58% of the students enrolled and girls account for 42%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 82.5%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 59% eligibility.

The school has a new principal after the retirement of the previous long serving principal.

### Overall Evaluation

#### This school is proficient.

Faculty and staff at the Herbert H. Lehman High School community enthusiastically support and promote a positive and nurturing school environment. During this her first year, the principal has established a new sense of direction promoting extensive professional development with an emphasis on raising student achievement. Faculty is encouraged to participate in an extensive array of workshops and conferences to develop instruction. Teachers said that, "an atmosphere of experimentation of teaching strategies has developed this year". Whilst within departments, teaching staff share effective instructional practices and data analysis: inter-department visitations, periodic evaluations and revisions, and opportunities for greater school-wide teacher collaborations are underdeveloped. The school is successful in providing staff with accurate and timely data through its innovative, in-house developed assessment program to strengthen student monitoring. Teachers and administration are confident in the quality of student progress reports and periodic assessments. Students appreciate that their teachers, "even the AP's", provide extensive opportunities for: student-teacher meetings, one on one tutoring, Saturday and after-school extra help to improve student achievement and performance. Students commend the school for offering a wide range of elective subjects, after-school activities, clubs and athletic teams.

Most of the students' work on display within the school has rubrics aligned to state standards with some containing teacher's comments on areas of achievement and improvement. Although, staff monitor student progress in English language arts, math, social studies, science, foreign language and for English language learners it not always present in the remaining core subjects. Similarly, individual student profiles show periodic assessments and learning goals but interim review and revised goal setting is inconsistent. The school is making good progress in establishing departmental inquiry teams that meet regularly to look at how the pass-rate in Regents and achievement in general can be improved using an item analysis approach to effectively identify student needs.

The school has yet to find effective ways to communicate with a majority of parents to assist in the monitoring of student progress, attendance, and scholarship even though there is a recently introduced parent website, "Pupil Path". Parents feel welcome in the school but are eager for further coordination to reinforce the school's current efforts.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school collects and uses a variety of data to determine the needs of individual students and student groups enabling the school to determine goals and objectives.
- Faculty are enthusiastic and supportive which promotes staff and student relationships which promotes a positive learning environment allowing students to feel secure, nurtured and respected.
- The administration's use of the school budget effectively supports an extensive selection of professional development activities, which promotes additional resources to strengthen instructional practices.
- In a short time period, the principal has worked collaboratively with the school staff to accurately analyze student growth and achievement to improve student outcomes.
- The school leadership actively promotes staff engagement and participation in departmentally organized inquiry teams whose student based analysis is improving student achievement in Regents classes.
- Goals are clear and measurable based on comprehensive and detailed data ensuring that all school leaders are focused on programs and tasks that improve student progress and performance.

### What the school needs to improve

- Develop ways to improve communication and engagement with parents to increase parental support in promoting the school's expectations as well as them knowing and understanding the goals.
- Provide a structure for faculty in all core subjects to increase occasions to inter-visit, share best practice and evaluate instructional strategies so that frequent timely adjustments to planning and practice can be made.
- Extend the successful focus on periodic data evaluation so that effective monitoring of, not only core subjects, but graduation, attendance, and credit accumulation rates can be improved and revised throughout the school year.
- Build upon the good practice that includes sharing of monitoring student progress over time to develop effective student profiles in creative and performing arts.

## Part 3: Main Findings

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

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The school uses a range of assessments and data that enables faculty and administrators to identify and analyze student performance and scholarship. Analysis has determined that the graduation rate has not measurably increased over the last three years especially among the English language learners. Accordingly the school has taken steps to remedy matters whereby English language learner teachers and teachers of business, art, and music collaborate in developing a curriculum infusing Hispanic culture in the curriculum resulting in deepening the engagement and content understanding of this student population. The school has been proactive in finding ways to provide the staff with accurate and timely data to strengthen student monitoring. "Skedula", has been developed which is an innovative in-house designed, on-line assessment instrument that provides all staff with individual and group information. As such it can incorporate: individual education plans, cohort status, learning styles, special interests and abilities, and scholarship results amongst other data to form a comprehensive student profile. This combined with the data from other assessment tools such as "Aris" and "Acuity" provides teachers with the information to effectively revise instructional strategies and develop student goals.

The school leadership collectively aligns school assessments with state curriculum and state standards and rubrics are displayed prominently in classrooms to ensure consistency. Data and freshman cohort teams meet weekly to review assessments and analyze student progress although they do not focus on interim goals and revisions. However, data monitoring by the teams and administration has identified high percentages of English language learners and special education students not graduating in four years. To address these deficiencies, the special education department is providing additional academic and faculty support to the incoming self-contained 9<sup>th</sup> graders. The foreign language department is providing workshops for all English language learners to increase mastery level and passing on the Spanish Regents exams. Both practices are proving effective in improving the passing percentages of each group.

**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.**

Previous Quality Reviews raised the need for the faculty to have greater accessibility to student information. Significant progress is evident in this area with the successful involvement of faculty and administrators in utilizing the data reports. Teachers are successfully accessing cohort, scholarship, behavior, and attendance information to

determine student goals. Teacher binders have student goals by class based on data in addition to formal and informal assessments. This information assists teachers in planning and addressing individual and group goals as well as differentiating instruction.

The system also allows department leaders the ability to focus on the implications for the school as well as their departments. Department meeting agendas and action goals, as well as teacher and student goals reflect these assessments. Teachers use this information to differentiate instruction and modify goal setting. The school provides a myriad of services to underachieving students offering tutoring: regents practices, and after school and Saturday workshops, however these offerings have not yet proved effective in improving the graduation rate. Most departments are focusing on the lowest one-third percentile as an element of their goals although progress report data indicates that additional reflection and revision is necessary. Students are inspired by President Obama to achieve, and believe that this school presents them with an array of opportunities; but at the same time, they indicate that school-wide participation in extra help offerings is not universal.

The development of the Comprehensive Educational Plan is increasingly involving faculty, parents, administrators, and students. This plan includes goals to address current challenges including: credit accumulation, decreasing major disturbances, and increasing freshmen earning English arts credits. The principal and security personnel are focusing on level 1 and 2 infractions and have reduced the number of Superintendent and Principal's suspensions. Twenty-five students have been trained in peer mediation and successfully engaged in mediations to diffuse student conflicts. The principal also discontinued the option of off campus lunch for 9<sup>th</sup> graders resulting in increasing attendance for this cohort throughout the school day. "Annualization" has been implemented for identified English language arts, math, social studies, and sciences classes to eliminate the practice of completely re-programming the school at the beginning of every semester. This recent arrangement serves to increase the amount of instructional time during the school year and has resulted in an increase in passing percentages and credit accumulation for the 2010 cohort.

Evidence of goal setting and progress are reflected in the publishing of student work in classroom, hallways and display cases. Most of this work has rubrics aligned to state standards and assessments. Some student work contained teacher's comments on areas of achievement and improvement. The school has yet to find effective ways to communicate with a majority of parents to assist in the monitoring of student progress, attendance, and scholarship even with the development of the parent website, *Pupil Path*. Parents feel welcome in the school but are eager for a new parent coordinator to be employed to reinforce and improve the school's efforts.

**Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The school curriculum has course offerings that appeal to a wide range of student abilities and interests. In addition to the core requirements, selections include thirteen advanced placement classes, the mathematics and science Gateway Program and electives in financial management and technology. The school has over 30 teams and clubs to provide further diversity. During the review, a team competed in the Federal

Reserve competition for high school students and won first place in the entrepreneurship category.

Faculty and staff are supportive, enthusiastic, and nurturing providing an environment of support and concern. Students are safe and secure and say that teacher and administrators “never give up on us”. The scholarship of students in the freshman cohort groups has improved and freshman cohort teacher meet weekly to monitor student achievement, attendance and behavior. Through a second chance program, selected students are able to accumulate credits successfully completing the requirements for graduation. Guidance counselors who evaluate attendance and scholarship each marking period closely monitor this program. Students have all classes together in the *Gateway* program in math and science providing a cohort with shared goals and expectations. Students in this program have shown achievement gains over the last three years particularly in the sciences.

Teachers see the value in publishing student’s achievements as a means to encouraging raised performance. Prominently displayed in classrooms are announcements applauding student progress and student achievement. Ongoing evaluation of students’ performance is also used to assist the planning of future instruction as seen in a web design class where students received an immediate assessment to rate their understanding of key design elements.

The administration has made budget allocations reflecting the commitment to differentiated instruction and cooperative learning. One way the administration has reduced the student-teacher ratio is the allocation of resources to finance team teaching classes. The school reports that the willingness of the teachers to move in a new direction for instruction and to share materials exceeds administration’s expectations. Initial informal assessment shows evidence that these changes in ways of teaching is effectively raising student scholarship and passing percentages.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The principal and her cabinet are providing professional development to the faculty based on an analysis of student achievement and school goals. Teachers attend workshops and conferences both off and on site using the knowledge and strategies to improve instruction and student outcomes. Differentiated instruction and cooperative learning are emphasized and reinforced by consultants and departmental leaders and formal and informal observations are reflective of this priority that has impacted positively on the development of instructional skills. The English department utilizes an informal observation feedback form so that an observer can record effective teaching strategies and student outcomes providing a tool from which teachers can revise and improve their goals. All new teachers have mentors and the math department requires them to observe an experienced teacher on a daily basis enabling them to assess their instructional practices. Although, the school uses data effectively to determine individual, group and school-wide needs, the impact of professional development on achievement and student outcomes is not regularly evaluated.

The school administration is refining its approach to inquiry teams and has encouraged teacher participation by establishing teams in: English language arts, English language learners, math, social studies and science. Each department prioritized their target population using a variety of assessments including analysis of Regents results. To have the greatest impact on student achievement, the science, social studies and math departments identify low student proficiency on specific tasks which become the focus of instruction for a target group of students. The relevant assessments include attendance, test item analysis and learning styles. This strategy has been effective in English language arts and social studies based on teacher tests and Regents practice examinations. Some good work in careful analysis and discussion is resulting. Although students have been identified in science, interventions have not yet occurred but the science inquiry team agrees that to achieve maximum results, goal setting and interventions should occur sooner in the school year.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 principal has successfully focused staff attention on analyzing student goals and improving student achievement by extensive professional development activities within a "flexible learning environment". The administrative team has used relevant information and assessments in setting goals and adjusting plans for improvement. These goals are dedicated to the school's vision of improving attendance, graduation rates, and credit accumulation. Pupil personnel services conduct small group interventions and regular monitoring of student attendance to improve credit accumulation and graduation rates resulting in the percentage of students earning five or more credits for the fall semester exceeding the school's target. The school has evaluated subgroup data and identified short- and long-term goals that identify low performance of special education students, English language learners and the 2012 cohort. English language learners are taught English language arts skills in foreign languages thus increasing proficiency in both subjects. Special education students are identified by regular classroom teachers and provided with additional time and support. The school did not meet "Adequate Yearly Progress" in English language arts for all students and math for students with disabilities and the graduation rate has remained consistently below that of similar schools for the past three years. Consequently, the English language arts department is focusing instruction on Task 3 of the Regents examination after data analysis provided evidence of poor student performance. Departmentalized instruction has increased some student progress based on teacher assessments and English Regents practice examinations although the 2012 cohort does not yet show significant improvement in percentages earning five or more credits.

The administration and staff are committed to student achievement, however benchmarks and adjustments based on marking period data are not uniformly made impacting school-wide achievement. The principal, according to staff and parents has exhibited a high level of commitment and focus on improving student progress and scholarship encouraging the school community to work collaboratively toward the goal of improving achievement for all students at Lehman High School

# School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: Herbert H. Lehman High School</b>	△	▷	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?		<b>X</b>		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

## DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYQ, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

**Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.**

To what extent do ...	△	➤	✓	+
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?				X
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?			X	
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?			X	
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X	

**Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.**

To what extent do school leaders...	△	➤	✓	+
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?			X	
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?			X	
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?			X	
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X	

**Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 ...	△	➤	✓	+
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?			X	
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?			X	
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?			X	
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?			X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X	

Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed