

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

Herbert H. Lehman

**High School 405
3000 East Tremont Avenue
Bronx
NY 10461**

Principal: Dr. Janet Saraceno

Dates of review: April 13 - 15, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Sara Carvajal

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Herbert H. Lehman is a high school with 4075 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 23% Black, 61% Hispanic, 9% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 59% of the students enrolled and girls account for 41%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 is not available.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Herbert H. Lehman is one of the largest high schools in New York City. Moreover, assorted streams of summative data indicate that students require significant support in Regents' testing, credit accumulation and timely graduation. Therefore, school leaders, which include a highly focused executive principal, have made the purposeful decision to reconfigure its enormous student population into small learning communities. This major change began in September with grades 9 and 10. Consequently, a great paradigm shift for students and teachers alike has occurred, as they notice that the smaller, thematic communities tailor instruction and guidance supports in a far more personalized fashion than in the past. Whereas the implementation has fared well this year, school leaders do not yet demonstrate that structures are in place, which support interim checkpoints throughout the year, gauging the effectiveness of the new communities as well as identifying areas that require further development. In addition, the school does not yet have the full complement of safety and discipline supports in place that cater to the large population, ensuring the orderly environment, which students experience in the classrooms, is throughout the entire school community.

Data-driven teacher teamwork has grown steadily this year within the small learning communities, primarily because school leadership has instituted a highly structured schedule that empowers teachers to meet consistently each week. In addition, administrators and teacher leaders collaborate often, engaging in assorted conversations about pedagogy that affect the increased quality of practice and student outcomes in projects. One of the major highlights of the school is its use of two technology-based data tools, which support school leaders and faculty in aggregating and disaggregating student demographics, summative and formative assessment data, and other pertinent information so that key school decisions, which inform student achievement, are made. At this time, however, several constituents voice that the school requires further improvement in the consistency of its communication of student progress with all students and their families, including those not embraced by the small learning communities, so that parents are equipped to monitor and support their children's progress.

School leaders have reconstructed the campus so that its key goals focus on student outcomes in a data-driven manner. However, the school does not fully engage parents as leaders in crafting the school's vision. Similarly, the school does not yet demonstrate goal-setting structures that consistently ensure monitoring and adjustment to goals or practices throughout the year. As a result, students and their families possess solely remote ownership over their annual aspirations.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Leaders make informed and effective organizational decisions across many aspects of the school that support improvements in achievement.
 - This year, the school has strategically repositioned a great majority of its staff and resources to support the implementation of small learning communities for students in grades 9 and 10. As a result, “everyone is on a new learning curve” which includes a more inclusive environment with heterogeneous grouping across classes. Most teachers are greatly excited about the surge of their common planning time that has stemmed from the recent restructuring. Similarly, several teachers agree that the school’s smaller configuration of the school organization supports students’ socio-emotional and academic needs well as they “can’t hide behind anonymity anymore” as in the past.
- Teachers benefit from participating in professional collaborations that foster reflection as well as providing options for researching effective instructional techniques.
 - Within the school’s six small learning communities, teachers unanimously agree that the rapidly evolving teacher teamwork creates a winning basis for increased student achievement. Teams meet three times each week, as per a highly structured schedule that prompts participants to engage consistently in “kid talk”, collaborative data-driven student conferences, and interdisciplinary discussions. Because of these ongoing, intimate conversations regarding the academic trends and socio-emotional needs of individuals and groups of students, teachers feel well supported by one another, impacting significantly on students’ requirements in classrooms and tutorial programs.
- The school effectively employs data tools that enable assorted constituents to analyze the impact of interventions and track student progress towards their achievement goals in all core subjects.
 - School leaders and faculty use intranet and web-based versions of an online data tool that aggregates scholarship data, teachers’ anecdotal notes, transcript summaries, daily attendance, and incident report information, forming a composite portrait of each student. In addition, the school employs a second data tool, provided by the school support organization, which enables school leaders to filter and analyze student data by gender, cohort, and English language learner or special education status. Consequently, the school adjusts student programs and teachers are equipped to modify classroom instruction accordingly.
- The administrative cabinet has created a learning community that is focused on student outcomes with a vision to continue to accelerate learning.
 - After analyzing a wide array of data, inclusive of Regents’ data, scholarship reports, graduation rates, incident reports, and the Learning Environment Survey outcomes, school leaders have documented a short list of school-wide goals and action plans that support increased student achievement by addressing very focused concerns in these targeted areas.
- The school has established effective systems for monitoring teaching practice with a clear focus on improving instructional practices.

- The small learning communities' structure has enabled school leaders to engage the majority of teachers in a school-wide paradigm shift from traditional frontal teaching to tailored planning and instruction that aligns with the changing needs of students. Administration supports teachers via ongoing lesson observations, snapshot walkthrough feedback, and periodic conversations regarding individual student work samples and cumulative student scholarship. These supports complement the consistent teacher teamwork, and consequently, have improved teacher pedagogy so that students are consistently interested in their learning.
- The school uses a variety of systems for ongoing monitoring of curriculum, pedagogy, and resources.
 - Administrators and teachers used a system of learning walks to adjust pedagogy regularly. By identifying key “look-fors” and highlighting them throughout the school, the staff added successful strategies that moved learning. Similarly, staff worked departmentally and across departments to check curriculum and adjust it. For example, in social studies the addition of a historical novel needed several adjustments so that outcomes were successful. By carefully evaluating and adjusting practice throughout the year, they supported student learning.
 - The administrative team used ongoing data analysis to monitor organizational and instructional changes. For example, at the beginning of the year, an assistant principal position was eliminated, but ongoing data analysis led to reinstating that position to better support student learning. Because of these systems, the school was better equipped to adjust decisions and realign resources to serve student needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand on safety, discipline, and student support initiatives, so that the calm, respectful and nurturing environment, which students experience in the classrooms, transcends to all facets of the school community.
 - Students, parents, and teachers unanimously agree that, at this time, the school best supports the safety and well-being of students while they are in classrooms. Students' traveling between classes by large masses continues to be a great concern that results in sporadic loitering in hallways and random acts of inappropriate behavior between students. Additional supports, such as an increased number of corridor sweeps and additional dean patrols, are evolving.
 - The school does not yet include students in grades 11 and 12 in its small learning communities. Therefore, students in those grades do not benefit from the same tailored guidance structures as the freshmen and sophomores. As a result, several students in the upper grades express that the faculty does not consistently connect with their socio-emotional needs beyond the sports arena.
- Improve communication and collaboration with all students and their families so that parents increase their capacity to assist in their children's learning and tracking of progress towards attaining set goals.
 - Only a handful of teachers in the school have begun the worthy practice of using rubric-aligned graphic organizers that prompt targeted groups of students to become deeply reflective of the quality of their writing in the content areas. As a result, not all students and parents fully understand the

intended role of rubric grades and comments in relaying the strengths and weaknesses of work products.

- The school has not yet introduced families to the effective use of ARIS Parent Link. As a result, most parents are unclear on how the tool could optimize their understanding of their children's progress and how to structure supports at home.
- Refine goal-setting structures so that these consistently facilitate the monitoring of students' progress and the adjustment to student goals.
 - School leaders have worked with a wide array of data to outline annual goals for the school and targeted students. Similarly, assorted designees use this data to track student progress for attendance, suspensions, scholarship, and credit accumulation. However, administrators do not yet demonstrate the effective use of interim benchmarks that scaffold toward the mastery of annual school-wide goals. As a result, the school does not adjust the goals cited in the Comprehensive Educational Plan during the course of the year in a way that ensures optimal student achievement.
 - A vast majority of teachers utilizes rubrics to either grade or provide a cursory compliment on student projects for individuals and groups of students. However, the inconsistent use of the rubrics results in a lack of clarity for students on the interim next steps that could boost their academic successes.
- Explore additional options to increase parental involvement in leadership activities so that families sustain an active voice in school matters and own an active role in increasing student achievement.
 - Parent members of the school leadership team state that they have not actively contributed to school-wide goals this year due to their intermittent attendance at key meetings. As a result, parent leaders are minimally informed of the school's goals and thereby, experience great difficulty in relaying the school's targeted expectations to the greater parent community.
 - The newly hired parent coordinator is currently developing systems for increased communication between the school and home. Backpack flyers, mailings, and phone calls are a sample of the outreach that enlists parent participation in various workshops. However, too few parents consistently assist school in organizing and expediting major school events. Consequently, parental involvement is significantly low and the core team of involved parents feels underutilized as leadership resources.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Herbert H. Lehman High School	Δ	▶	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	Δ	▶	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			X	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			X	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X	
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	Δ	▶	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			X	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X				
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?		X					
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?		X					
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X				
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			X				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X				
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X				
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?		X					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed