



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

**Quality Review Report  
Division of Performance and Accountability  
2010-2011**

# **Quality Review Report 2010-2011**

**Harlem Renaissance High School**

**05M285**

**22 East 128 Street  
New York  
NY 10035**

**Principal: Nadav Zeimer**

**Dates of review: February 14-15, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Vivian Selenikas**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Harlem Renaissance High School is a transfer high school with 225 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 64% Black, 35% Hispanic, 1% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 0% English language learners and 12.9% special education students. Boys account for 40% of the students enrolled and girls account for 60%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 65.1%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is underdeveloped.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has a safe environment that strongly supports students' social emotional learning where each student is known well by at least one adult.
  - Students and teachers are respectful to each other in the hallways and in classrooms. Students feel that the staff is genuinely caring of their needs and that the school provides a caring and nurturing environment. Guidance counselors oversee specific groups of students with a common focus on supporting students' accelerated progress toward making up credits needed for graduation. Consequently, parents state they feel that they are welcome in the school and that their children are safe there.
  - Students are very enthusiastic about the opportunities they are given to focus on making up the credits they need for graduation. They also state that their teachers meet with them during lunch, before and after school if they need additional academic or emotional support. Parents also praise the outreach they receive through weekly progress reports, permitting them to keep on top of their children's progress.
- The school enables staff to support students' social and emotional needs and has developed support services with external partnerships that create a safe, inclusive and respectful culture in the school.
  - The school has a Living for the Young Family through Education (LYFE) center that allows mothers to return to school and focus on their education. A Learning to Work collaboration provides internships for students as they make progress academically. Collaborations with College Now, Hunter College Liberty Program, and Mission Society, are integrated with other school-based supports throughout the school day to meet students' needs.
  - New York University Social Work interns support the professional development needs of teachers through classroom level mentoring, so that they are better prepared to serve students with varied challenges.
- Individual teachers gather and examine classroom level data to supplement summative student performance to create a picture of individual students' strengths and areas of need.
  - Individual teachers use varying methods to gather student work products in their classrooms. Student folders were observed in some classes, several using the Diploma Plus standards to identify students' strengths and areas of need. Project based activities were observed in some classes which focuses students on completing assignments.
  - Some teachers give feedback on student work products. . Thus, some students receive feedback that they said made them feel as though they received the support they needed to improve academically.

## What the school needs to improve

- Align the curricula and academic tasks to State standards to engage a diversity of learners and emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills.
  - Teachers and school leaders do not align classroom level tasks and curricula to the State standards. While some teachers were observed to align their curricula to the Diploma Plus standards, this lack of consistent focus and alignment results in an observed lack of rigor in the classroom instruction.
  - Teachers are not consistent in analyzing classroom information about students. Some use multiple data sources such as teacher made assessments and students' prior performance to understand the learning needs of students in their classes. As a result, differentiation is limited and identification of strengths and weaknesses of students is inconsistent which results in some students achieving and others not being successful.
- Develop and align teacher pedagogy to ensure that it is engaging and differentiated so that all students produce meaningful work products.
  - Curriculum maps are comprised of a few unit plans in some key content areas. Many lacked assessments and measurable outcomes while some only listed alignment to Diploma Plus skills. The video portfolios have not become a learning outcome as part of curriculum planning. This resulted in teachers' activities being inconsistent in rigor and lacking focus for building standard based skills.
  - Students demonstrated a lack of understanding of material in several classes observed. Few classes check for understanding. Worksheets were not sufficient to answer teachers' questions. Many students have side conversations resulting in a general lack of critical thinking and student engagement.
- Create organizational systems and structures to support the learning needs of all students.
  - Attendance data is monitored closely as a school wide goal, as reported by the principal. Guidance counselors call home and there is outreach and home visits by the administrative staff, including the principal. However, there is no process or system that examines either the efficiency or the results to suggest other strategies or procedures that would actually improve attendance.
  - Although data is collected and examined, it is not organized and shared in ways that would narrow focus and allow the school to examine student needs. There is no school wide system to allow for teacher input to discuss and recommend changes that could impact school wide goals and improve achievement of all students.
- Identify a common instructional focus to build a coherent school academic culture that provides consistent and effective staff performance evaluation and actionable feedback to teachers.
  - Teachers are not observed regularly by school administration. They are not provided with timely feedback in writing about their teaching practice. This results in a lack of actionable feedback to teachers and a lack of focus around what is needed to improve teacher practice in order to impact student learning.

- The stated goal of a school wide reflection practice does not have an identified common instructional focus. That together with the lack of actionable feedback to teachers regarding their practice results in an inconsistent school academic culture that limits the impact on student achievement.
- Ensure consistency of actionable feedback to students and families on academic progress, using classroom level tools to track and adjust learning goals.
  - Parents expressed positive reactions to the progress reports they are provided with weekly regarding their children's academic progress. These progress reports provide information on student assessment results and attendance. However, they do not include specific feedback on how parents can support their students' academic growth and learning, nor do they provide students with next learning steps for their academic progress.
  - Some individual teachers provide comments to students on their student work. However, there is no system of rubrics or feedback mechanisms that allow students and families to have specific information about the next steps students must take to improve their academic outcomes.
- Evaluate curricular and instructional practices to ensure that appropriate adjustments are made that align instructional decisions to improve impact on student learning.
  - Inquiry work is focused on the goal of school wide reflection practice. Inquiry emphasizes the needs of the school's "toughest challenges" However, this emphasis does not result in teachers aligning differentiated instructional decisions to impact a variety of learners. Additionally, teacher teams emphasize case conferencing, which allows for student social emotional growth but does not provide targeted strategies for classroom level work, thereby limiting capacity building and student academic progress.
- Create systems to measure progress toward interim goals in order to identify areas where changes or improvements are needed from one year to the next.
  - Instructional rounds and teacher inter-visitation were stated goals for the school for which little evidence of implementation was provided. The lack of a system of instructional rounds around a common instructional focus obviated an opportunity to allow teachers to share.
  - School leaders and teams of teachers do not have systems for measuring progress toward interim goals they have set for groups of students. This does not allow for identifying area where implementation of targeted strategies in the classroom is needed.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: Harlem Renaissance High School</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>	<b>X</b>			
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?	<b>X</b>			
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?	<b>X</b>			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?	<b>X</b>			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?	<b>X</b>			
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?	<b>X</b>			
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?	<b>X</b>			
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?		<b>X</b>		

**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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?	<b>X</b>			
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?	<b>X</b>			
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?	<b>X</b>			
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			<b>X</b>	

**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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?	<b>X</b>			
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?	<b>X</b>			
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?	<b>X</b>			
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?			<b>X</b>	

**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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?	<b>X</b>			
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?	<b>X</b>			
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?	<b>X</b>			
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?	<b>X</b>			

<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>