



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Harvey Milk High School

M586

**2-10 Astor Place
New York, New York 10003**

Principal: Alan Nolan

Dates of review: March 3 - 4, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Nancy Gannon

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Harvey Milk High School serves students at the High school (Transfer School) level. The school has 76 students enrolled in grades 9 through 12. The school population comprises 5% white students, 41% black students, 3% Asian students, and 51% Hispanic students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 29% special education students. Boys account for 62% of the students enrolled and girls account for 38%. Attendance data is not available.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School staff and partners strongly support the social and emotional needs of a wide range of students in ways that allow them to focus on academics.
 - The school's collaboration with founding partner Hetrick Martin Institute, (HMI), provides extraordinarily rich resources to students, including ongoing counseling, academic enrichment, and college guidance. All students take enrichment classes every Wednesday and many see staff social workers on an ongoing basis to provide support. In addition, the Institute provides information and support around relevant medical issues. This network of support is crucial to nurture the academic growth in a population that often arrives at the school in crisis.
 - In order to ensure that all teachers are ready and able to meet the needs of the school's population, HMI provides ongoing professional development, including sensitivity training for all staff at the school. In addition, Institute staff social workers partner with teachers as "buddy advisories" to guide students in their social-emotional growth. These collaborations effectively support teachers in their efforts to meet students' needs and help them mature.
- The school has developed and communicated clear, targeted goals that focus on instructional improvement to ensure that all students receive support.
 - School wide all stakeholders focus on balanced literacy. This is evidenced through conversations with parents and students, and teacher participation in literacy classes. The principal, in conjunction with the network, has developed a map that, guides the implementation of this goal over the course of the year. This clear focus has resulted in an atmosphere where everyone is working toward the same end around academic achievement.
- The school aligns an array of resources, including teacher and student time, in ways that support the instructional goals of the school.
 - Despite a low register and tightening budget, the school provides students with small classes where they are well known by their teachers. Students also use an online credit recovery program to complete coursework and receive credit; this is particularly important in a transfer school where students come from other high schools with various missing pieces in their education. Teachers' access to technology and to coaches, who are funded through grants, allows potential to make academic progress. Support for this year's work toward increased literacy skills is evidenced by the investment in classroom-leveled libraries, in literacy classes for all students, and by the increased time in teachers' schedules for collaboration with colleagues. This careful matching of resources to the school goals provides the school's with the ability to address improving academic achievement.

- Teachers effectively communicate to parents and students through an ongoing dialogue that highlights student progress.
 - Families feel well informed about student progress at the school through ARIS training and access to a school-based online grade book. Although teachers use that tool inconsistently, families report that teachers who do not regularly upload grades have other methods of communicating with families, including ongoing calls and emails. This ongoing communication allows families to actively work as partners with teachers in ensuring that students are progressing academically.
 - Students report ongoing opportunities to reflect on their own learning by using school-wide rubrics to self-assess their work. Reading and writing rubrics posted throughout the school, as shared by students, are used by them to self-evaluate their writing, determine next steps, and measure their growth. Consequently, students are empowered to be agents in their own learning.
- The school environment combines support and encouragement that allows families to engage with the work of the school.
 - Through the parent association and the school leadership team, parents are involved in a wide range of activities related to the school. They are currently fund-raising to support a student performance and are involved in school-wide efforts to improve student attendance. Parents say the school is “very open to suggestions and quick to try things that are suggested.” The feeling of partnership between school staff and families increases the support for young people in their path to academic success.

What the school needs to improve

- Create a system for monitoring over time professional development and teacher teams so that adjustments can be made to increase student achievement.
 - Last year’s Learning Environment Survey reflected that teachers did not feel well supported by the professional development offered by the school. In response, the school has increased the amount of time that teachers have to collaborate and learn. However, there is no system to measure whether that time is used effectively. In addition, the school is not monitoring how teamwork impacts teacher practice or how professional development impacts teacher practice. The school cannot therefore assess the value of this work or make adjustments to ensure that teachers are well supported this year.
 - Although the school invests in coaches, there is no ongoing assessment of teacher capacity building throughout the staff. New teachers and experienced teachers had various strengths and challenges but with no system for measuring teacher growth, therefore the school cannot make the necessary changes to effectively support strong pedagogy throughout the school.
- Develop protocols that support an ongoing analysis of a wide range of data so that trends are clear and the school’s focus is aligned with areas of need.

- School leaders look at some summative and some formative data, including 8th grade State test scores, credit accumulation, periodic assessments, and Regents' results. However, the process of examining this information does not include looking at various subgroups and does not result in identification of trends or clear next steps for the school. For example, because it has not identified a significant gap between progress of Hispanic and Black students, the school has not addressed this gap. Because the school does not yet have this kind of understanding of data patterns, there is a disconnect between school decisions and student learning.
- Implement systems that provide clear, coherent, and frequent feedback that helps teachers understand and implement strategies that accelerate learning.
 - The school has teachers with a range of experience but provides very little differentiation to meet their various learning needs. As a result, new teachers are not suitably supported in moving to their next step as effective pedagogues.
 - The principal uses formal observations at the school to consistently push the instructional goals of the school, but has not adequately incorporated the analysis of data or student work to understand the strengths of and next steps for teachers. Without looking at these areas, feedback is limited, does not provide key information that helps support teachers, and hinders good decision making around teacher retention, thus impacting student achievement.
- Develop strategies so that all teachers effectively use classroom and periodic assessment to adjust instruction and promote academic achievement.
 - Currently, the school uses exit slips as a way for teachers to collect ongoing information from students about what they do and do not understand. However, not all teachers align these assessments to measure progress toward standards, and not all teachers use the collected information to adjust future instruction. As a result, these assessments are not yet an effective tool to guide instructional strategies or support student learning.
 - Teachers use a variety of periodic assessments to measure student growth in math and reading. However, they currently do not use that information to understand and address the needs of student subgroups. As a result, current gaps among subgroups go unaddressed by classroom instruction.
- Support teachers in deepening rigor and engagement so that every student is being pushed to achieve at high levels.
 - Classes across the school are small and intimate, with clear evidence that teachers enjoy working with the students. However, whole group instruction is the norm, even though teachers consistently speak of the diversity of students' skills in any given class. Although students are consistently compliant, student-to-student dialogue was virtually non-existent and engagement was hard to measure. In many classes, the tasks students were asked to do evidenced little to no rigor. As a result,

the school does not consistently challenge students in ways that push them to their highest levels of learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Harvey Milk High School	UD	D	P	WD
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, 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	

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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			

Quality Review Scoring Key

UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed
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