

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Heritage School

High School 680

**1680 Lexington Avenue
Manhattan
NY 10029**

Principal: Luis Duany

Dates of review: May 5 - 6, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Jill Herman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Heritage School is a high school with 293 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 27% Black, 70% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 86.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders examine a range of data when making decisions regarding teachers' evaluations in order to raise instructional practices as well as support professional development.
 - A clear, transparent observation process that provides concrete feedback to improve instruction is linked to both school goals and teacher's individual goals. School leaders also examine scholarship reports, student work, and student feedback, in order to develop a complete picture of teachers' contribution to the school community and their ability to raise students' achievement.
 - The school's partnering, since its inception, with Teachers College allows staff to participate in free courses in content areas, critical friends training, and weekly lunch meetings for new teachers on topics such as classroom management and culturally responsive teaching, all of which greatly support adult learning.
- School leaders and staff gather a wide range of data in order to understand the strengths and areas of need at the school.
 - School leaders and staff identified their strengths and areas of need by examining scholarship reports, attendance, suspensions, Regents' pass rates, progress report, attendance, parental involvement, and communication, in order to develop a deep and complete understanding of school. Key areas such as credit accumulation and literacy for struggling readers are priorities to improve academic success for students.
 - School leaders and teacher teams use periodic assessments and classroom data to deepen understanding of the students. Having identified literacy as an issue in passing Regents, a ninth grade-reading program was put in place that has increased students' fluency.
- There is a clear set of goals, based on data, designed to accelerate student learning.
 - The cabinet, comprised of grade team leaders and administration, review a wide range of data, including The Learning Environment Survey, Regents' pass rates, attendance, credit accumulation, teachers' pass rates, and the Progress Report, to develop clear measurable goals targeted to improve students' mastery of course work, and to ensure students graduate high school in a timely manner.
 - A strong school leadership team sees feedback from teachers conveyed via grade leaders and from members of the student council as contributing to goal setting. Additionally, grade-level teams' and teacher's goals are reflective of school goals, thus demonstrating buy-in and support that strengthens a coherent focus of their work.

- Multiple data sources and structures facilitate the ability to evaluate professional activities in order to support capacity building.
 - A teacher team working with an organization to improve student attendance and behavior was evaluated by administration in regard to its impact at the school level. Monitoring over time, including minutes of team meetings and feedback from teachers, showed no evidence of impact on student behavior. As a result, the team was terminated.
 - Teachers set class level goals with administration, meet frequently to assess progress, and receive targeted support from peers. In addition, student work, class pass rates, Regents' pass rates, and student input, contribute to data that informs retention decisions and identifies opportunities to provide leadership development.
- Teachers benefit from participating in professional collaborations with colleagues that are used to strengthen their instructional practices.
 - The math team conducts lesson studies, shares assignments, and strategies in order to improve their practice. A math teacher related how impressed she was at the amount of work another math teacher's students accomplished in class. This led her to provide her students with additional handouts, resulting in decreased copying from the board, and an increase in instructional time and student time on task.
 - Grade team leaders who on the cabinet, apply for their position, are selected with input and recommendations by other staff members, and receive facilitation training. As evidenced in the Learning Environment Survey, teachers respect each other greatly, rely on each other for support, and learn from each other.

What the school needs to improve

- Design curricula and assessments across all subject areas that embed rigorous habits, higher order thinking skills and provide evidence of college ready skills.
 - Curriculum maps vary and do not emphasize key standards. Additionally, assessments are generic in nature and primarily reflect skills related to Regents. Therefore, staff lack the ability to focus on what students need to know and how they demonstrate an understanding of their work, and teachers are unable to gather sufficient evidence relative to the academic growth of students.
 - A group of students in grades 9 through 12 stated that they have never written a paper longer than a page, nor written a research paper. Currently, there is no evidence of this assignment in any curriculum map. Students talk about and show what they have learned primarily in regard to Regents' prep assignments. This lack of rigor in classrooms and assignments results in students not being challenged and college ready.
- Strengthen classroom practices and routines to reflect levels and learning styles of diverse learners in order to increase engagement and accelerate student learning across the classrooms.

- Teachers are not yet well versed in their understanding and implementation of backwards planning, or the workshop model, which were introduced this year as protocols for instruction. Most lessons have do-nows, mini-lesson, and hands-on activity. However, time spent on components, understandings of group work, complexity of tasks; vary in ways that minimize student learning.
- Most classes are teacher dominated with limited students' responses to informational and leading questions. There is lack of clarity and expectation in visual assignments leading to low levels of achievement as evidenced by work products that do not show evidence of the use of critical thinking skills, and minimizes opportunities to raise students' academic thinking and learning.
- Ensure that organizational decisions are supporting and strengthening student outcomes.
 - Teachers meet in grade teams and content teams twice a month for a period. However, given the school's expectations of their work, this time is not sufficient. The continuity and consistency is not in place for them to achieve the school's goals and improve their practice, limiting school improvement and staffs' ability to create challenging academic tasks.
 - Due to large numbers of students who are missing either course and/or Regents' credits, additional prep classes have been created during the school day. Programming of these classes with five to 10 students, and credit recovery coursework offered in the afternoon, increases teachers' load and limits course offerings.
- Enhance teachers' capacity to use and analyze data to gain a clear sense of student's needs to enable classroom decisions to provide experiences for academic success.
 - Teams of teachers examine summative data, periodic assessments, and classroom data, but do not link the information to effecting classroom and/or instructional decisions. Consequently, a significant number of students are failing one or more classes, despite the goal related to credit accumulation.
 - In classrooms where students are repeating or need to retake Regents, there was no evidence of differentiation or specific plans about students' needs in order to be academically successful, thus impacting closing the achievement gap.
- Develop structures and procedures that reflect on and evaluate assessment protocols and how information is shared with families to develop coherence of practice and understanding.
 - Despite a large number of students not receiving credit as reflected on the Progress Report, the school does not regularly evaluate the impact of departments' grading policies, even as teachers have begun to introduce the evolving State standards in classrooms, greatly impacting aligning practices.
 - Although, parents receive six reports a year and some progress reports, they are unable to articulate their children's strengths and weaknesses and are not articulate about what their child is learning. This lack of parent understanding limits their collaboration and support to raise academic outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Heritage	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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