

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Harriet Tubman

**Elementary School
250 West 127 Street
New York
NY 10027**

Principal: Elizabeth Jarrett

Dates of review: March 5 - 6, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Gale Reeves

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Harriet Tubman is an elementary school with 380 students from prekindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 64% Black, 35% Hispanic and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 91.5 %.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school provides a safe, nurturing environment that coordinates supports to impact positively on students' personal and academic development. (1.4)
 - Good interpersonal relationships and additional support personnel allow students to benefit from the school's inclusive culture. Students and parents appreciate that they can turn to teachers and the guidance counselor to help resolve personal issues and concerns that interfere with learning. A review of incident reports led to the adoption of the Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) initiative. This school wide initiative involves all members of the school community who monitor students' behavior. Positive behaviors, including demonstration of specific character traits such as compassion, respect and responsibility allow students the opportunity to earn stars as a reward. Students then utilize these stars to shop in the school store, the Galaxy, at specific times during the month. This focused initiative has led to a reduction in the number of student removals from the classroom as well as a notable reduction in principal and superintendent suspensions. As such, students and families report that they feel "safe" and are able to focus more on their academic achievement.
 - The school's small class sizes enable every student to be well known by school faculty who help support their academic growth. The iZone pilot enables students to work on activities that adjust to their learning needs. This level of differentiation allows students to improve specific skills and increase their academic performance. The student nutrition committee, comprised of students in grades two through five, meets monthly with the dietitian. Their input, and the school's focus on health, has resulted in a change in the menu to now include "meatless" Mondays. Additionally, the student council meets with the school's librarian and provides input in activities that best meet their needs. These activities demonstrate students' active participation in shaping school-wide decisions, thereby bolstering self-esteem and the development of leadership skills.
- The school has strong internal and external supports that have a positive impact on students' social, emotional and academic development. (4.4)
 - School bulletin boards, frequent student assemblies and daily announcements acknowledge and celebrate students' academic achievement. Spirit days such as Crazy Hat Day or Pajama Day foster positive student and staff interactions. As such, a positive and respectful culture permeates the school. School leaders state that the school's "phenomenal" guidance counselor and school nurse frequently provide well-delivered professional development to staff. Teachers are able to utilize the taught strategies in their classrooms and are well prepared to meet the social-emotional needs of challenging students, resulting not only in the reduction of guidance referrals, but also a lower referral rate to citywide agencies. Additionally, school leaders review suspension reports and student referral data on an ongoing basis. Discussions at cabinet meetings include the review of partnerships in order to ensure that services align with the school's goals and address the needs of targeted students.

As such, focused collaborations with Teachers College, Harlem Children's Zone, the Apollo Oral History Project and Verizon integrate well with school-based guidance services to meet the needs of students and their families. The collaboration with Cookshop also meets students' needs by providing hands-on exploratory experiences in cooking and healthy menu planning. These structures support students' moral development and have created high levels of involvement, which increase students' excitement about school and bolster their self-esteem.

- Assessment practices help identify student performance and progress so that instructional supports are designed to improve student outcomes. (2.2)
 - In addition to using common rubrics, grade level and department teams also create common assessments which are used to identify strengths and needs, as well as promote ongoing conversation and reflection. Second grade teachers are involved in a work sampling pilot whereby specific data is collected on five to seven students across three domains. Teachers are then asked to reflect on the data. This leads to a revision of specific areas in the curricula which align with state indicators in literacy and math with an emphasis on critical analysis and mathematical thinking. Consequently, teachers identify gaps and re-teach particular aspects of the curriculum to solidify learning.
 - Teacher teams organize and review assorted streams of data including student work products, running records, predictive assessments, item skills analysis and benchmark exams in math and English language arts. With the help of consultants, technology integrated programs allow teachers to design individualized learning paths for students based on their learning goals. Teachers have immediate access to real time assessment data and can swiftly make instructional adaptations. Teachers develop Personal Intervention Plans for selected students who are then reassessed every six to eight weeks to note gains. Additionally, all classroom-based teachers assemble data binders to track the progress of specific students as well as students in the lowest third, resulting in targeted afterschool supplemental support and small group tutoring. This strategic support leads to achievement gains of these students as noted on formative assessment tracking logs.
- Feedback from school leaders includes clear next steps to improve teacher practice and raise levels of student achievement. (4.1)
 - The principal and assistant principals actively support the teaching staff. School leaders facilitate monthly professional development and there is a voluntary Danielson study group which meets biweekly. Administration also conducts daily informal observations utilizing a school-developed protocol that provides feedback with a focus on several key domains from the Danielson framework. Based on the teachers' needs, a differentiated plan of support is then created with follow up conversations aligned to areas for growth as well as individually determined professional goals. As a result, new and untenured teachers promptly receive accurate verbal and written feedback and exhibit understanding of grade appropriate strategies that support student understanding. Additionally, administrators encourage intervisitations and learning walks where teachers provide feedback to each other. A review of teachers' growth plans, team conversations and

observed classroom visits, demonstrate that these structures and practices encourage teachers to refine their pedagogy and foster professional growth.

- School leaders make informed and effective organizational decisions that support improvements in learning. (1.3)
 - The principal's budgeting, coupled with staff input, result in the strategic use of resources that are aligned to the school's goals. Literacy and math specialists collaborate with and coach individuals and teams of teachers, who all share responsibility for targeted groups of students. The principal and staff proactively seek additional resources, such as a Wellness Grant, which seeks to improve the health and well-being of students by promoting healthy living habits, and other initiatives that encourage technology integration. Student work products reflect common grade planning units of study. Consequently, comparisons with baseline data reveal progress in students' independent reading levels and, thus, increased levels of comprehension. A hiring committee supports school leaders and ensures that selected staff are cognizant of, and their practices are well aligned to, the school's goals. After a review of data revealed noted declines on state assessments, the principal ensured that a two hour daily literacy block is now built into the schedule. Cluster teachers push in to support classroom based teachers in grades three to five. As evidenced in tracking logs of English language arts and math benchmark assessments, the decrease in the student to teacher ratio supports students' academic development, increases the shared level of accountability to accelerate student growth and is conducive to optimal levels of personal success.
- School leaders and staff use data-informed processes for planning and goal setting across grades and subjects to improve student outcomes. (3.1)
 - The principal's performance objectives and school goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan focused on increasing student proficiency levels in English language arts and math, align with clear, school-level action plans. These goals and objectives leverage growth in students' academic and social-emotional outcomes as noted on predictive and Early childhood literacy assessment system results. The principal and assistant principal plan for the school year by reviewing outcomes from state assessment data as well as the results of the School Survey and Progress Report. This is complemented by a needs assessment and regular review of Acuity and other streams of formative data. Teachers analyze data and set class goals in the lower grades. At the upper grades, students set their own learning goals and are encouraged to be accountable for their own learning. As such, the school community has developed a list of its most struggling students in English language arts and math, resulting in targeted assistance during the day and afterschool. Consequently, tracking logs reflect the academic growth of these identified students.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine the curriculum in order to consistently emphasize rigorous tasks so that higher order thinking skills and strategies cognitively engage all learners. (1.1)

- Core staff members deliberately adjust the curriculum in order to integrate standards into English language arts and math units of study. However, students are not engaged in the types of projects and tasks that apply knowledge and so their retention of content information is not solidified. Moreover, performance based tasks that probe for deep understanding and application of learning do not consistently extend across all content areas or grade levels so that all students are suitably challenged, are able to make personal connections to themselves and the world and are able to transfer their learning to new contexts.
- Improve and strengthen lesson planning so that teaching practices provide differentiated opportunities and student work products reflect high levels of student thinking and engagement. (1.2)
 - Some teachers prepare lessons that target the specific needs and strengths of students and employ differentiated strategies that address a wide range of student ability levels. This is not a practice in every class; therefore, not all students receive the academic support necessary to accelerate their learning. Additionally, data-based flexible grouping for instruction is evident in classrooms. However, not all teachers plan lessons that demonstrate sufficient engagement in higher order thinking so that meaningful work products demonstrate extension activities that stretch the thinking of higher achieving students.
- Develop greater consistency in evaluating and adjusting pedagogical practices in order to build coherence and accelerate student learning. (5.1)
 - School leaders and faculty attend a yearly retreat to plan the year long curricula and integrate state standards. They are at the beginning stages of integrating the Common Core Learning Standards and establishing specific time frames to evaluate and further align curricula, instructional units and practices across all content areas in response to student needs. Consequently, real world connections, higher order skills generating testable hypotheses and sustained conversations that give students the chance to support their views with evidence, change their minds and use questions as a way to learn more, are not yet the norm.
- Refine the work of teacher teams in order to maximize teacher collaboration and improve teacher practice and student outcomes. (4.2)
 - Grade level teams meet weekly to discuss specific skills and strategies. However the development of an inquiry approach is not well defined across all teams. As a result, team members across all grades do not consistently note trends and sufficiently reflect on instructional strategies in order to further develop and evaluate the effectiveness of their classroom level instructional decisions on their practices and student outcomes.
 - Key staff develop the curricula and provide feedback to school administrators. During team meetings, teachers have input in revising specific aspects of the curricula. However, although team conversations are facilitated by team leaders, teachers are not receiving sufficient support to develop their skills as facilitators of adult learning. Consequently, teams do not reflect together on their facilitation techniques in order to deepen

their leadership skills and refine tested theories to further accelerate students' growth and achievement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

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|---|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| School name: Harriet Tubman | 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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products? | | | 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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level? | | | X | |
| 2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum? | | | X | |
| 2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations? | | | 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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them? | | | 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, guidance/advisement 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, with particular attention to the CCLS? | | 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 |