

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Harlem Renaissance High School
High School 285

22 EAST 128 STREET
MANHATTAN
NY 10035

Principal: Nadav Zeimer

Dates of review: May 7 - 8, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Holly Reichert

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Harlem Renaissance High School is a transfer high school with 220 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 63% Black, 36% Hispanic, and 1% White. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 40% of the students enrolled and girls account for 60%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 64.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's respectful and welcoming environment provides students with multiple opportunities to learn and grow leading to increased student achievement. (1.4)
 - o Students are welcomed by the 'arrival team' first thing in the morning whose members meet, greet, and observe student entry behaviors, thus providing the first line for social and emotional support. If an issue is detected, all efforts are focused on providing what is needed so that the student can participate fully in school that day. Students mentioned that their advisors and advocate counselors, as well as teachers, the dean, and the guidance counselor provide them with encouragement, advisement, counseling, and academic tutoring throughout the day, during lunch and after school. Students described their school as a 'second home' where they feel like adults, respected, and comfortable. Additionally, the student council advocates for what the student body needs and wants. They have successfully lobbied for incentive trips, spirit days, and an attendance initiative overseen by a partner organization that is aimed at improving student attendance through the process of peer mentoring as a support for students who are struggling to come to school. Mentors call their mentees, inform them of incentives, track their progress, and maintain a bulletin board celebrating the initiative and its success. Students attribute their interest in learning, their social emotional growth, their perseverance in the face of challenges, and their academic achievement to the school community's cohesive and authentically supportive environment.
- The school community effectively gathers and analyzes student data to pinpoint areas of need in order to ensure student success over time. (2.1)
 - o With a clear picture of student need, each constituency of the school gathers and analyzes on-going data sets to redirect their efforts when and if adjustments are needed. Data displays are posted to support and celebrate student achievement and to focus the school community on staying on track with both academics and attendance. In the principal's office, the display of senior data cards color coded with credits and Regents' scores is updated weekly with current grades, attendance, and behavior flags. These cards enable staff to quickly identify students who are in need of and receiving additional support, and those who are receiving rewards for meeting and exceeding school standards. This system of data collection, analysis, and maintaining up-to-date information on students has led to staff continually addressing students' areas of need.
 - o The school has implemented a weekly student progress data system that allows the school community to track progress, notice patterns, and collectively address concerns. Students receive progress reports every Friday that include academic grades for all course work, anecdotal logs for behavior, and attendance records. Reviewed with students in their advisory classes, and by staff members at Friday meetings, students and staff are able to identify next steps and implement immediate responses the following week. As a result, the school community's constant review of the effectiveness of its support decisions can be monitored based on student progress and performance.
- The school's articulated goals are clearly linked to multiple sources of data focused on accelerating student social emotional and academic growth. (3.1)

- o The school's coherent vision and comprehensive analysis of social emotional and academic data underpins the process of meaningful goal setting and action planning involving the entire school community aimed at moving the students and school forward. Addressing the identified goal of increasing student cognitive engagement and student voice, starts with the end in mind whereby all graduating seniors present their academic work through video presentations, called EXPO, a powerful example of the trajectory of the accomplishment of this goal. Additionally, student voice is heard in the classroom by the use of circles and peer interaction. The school attributes an increase in written response scores on Regents' exams from 2011 to 2012 to increasing meaningful, content-rich student talk. Results from the Living Environment Regents' showed a 36.1% increase in correct written responses from June 2011 to January 2012. Furthermore, students commented that they feel more confident in speaking, writing, sharing their ideas as well as in their desire to do well in school and ask for help when needed.
- The school and its partners collaboratively set student specific learning goals using regularly collected data to keep them on and get them back on track. (3.2)
 - o Each Friday, staff and partners come together to analyze weekly progress reports and to set comprehensive learning goals for individual students, specifically focusing on areas of need related to attendance, behavior, and academics. The partners set forth an action plan for students, provide services to address their needs, work with the students, and track the progress of the goals over time. Timely attention to student needs through the development and tracking of these goals has led to students receiving differentiated support accelerating their social emotional and academic growth as seen by an increase in individual student attendance and academic scholarship. Another example of student goal setting, facilitated by the school and partners is through a post-secondary planning team focused on the goal setting process for potential graduates, thus preparing students for post secondary readiness. Individual goals, established via this process that range from credit accumulation to college application deadlines has contributed to an increase in college acceptance letters from four in Spring 2011 to 16 in Spring 2012.
- The school strategically works with its partners to provide strong youth development and advisory programs aimed at post-secondary readiness resulting in accelerated student academic and personal development. (4.4)
 - o The school and its partners provide a comprehensive and integrated approach to guidance, advisory, and post secondary readiness. Students commented that the moment they enter the school, specific attention is given to graduation, college, and career planning. Students said that the school provides a plethora of opportunities and support. Daily advisory class with their teacher advisor and partner advocate counselors provides individual and group support. The school's advisory curriculum provides a comprehensive program in overcoming obstacles and accomplishing goals. Additionally, students reported that they not only receive academic and social emotional guidance and counseling, they also have paid internship opportunities, community and college trips, and special events at the school that allow them to experience and interact with real people in the community and those who have personally experienced historical events. One such event focused on hearing the personal life stories of survivors of Hiroshima. Students stated how touched they were learning first hand from survivors about the effects of the atomic bomb, thus helping them to heighten their awareness and understanding of themselves and others.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop rigorous standards-aligned curriculum that engages all learners to promote and support the school wide focus on college readiness. (1.1)
 - o The school has developed standards-aligned curriculum in English language arts and is working on developing other subject area curriculum using the Diploma Plus curriculum development process. The school has been creating culminating tasks in all content areas this year that hold students accountable for their learning, set weekly performance goals, and ensure that students stay focused on assignment deadlines and their grades. The curriculum and culminating tasks under development are being aligned to key standards. Teachers are working on ways to further engage students by incorporating a variety of strategies to increase the level of cognitive rigor in questioning using Depth of Knowledge. While the school is developing curriculum and tasks aligned to key standards, not all subject area teachers have developed curriculum, and culminating tasks continue to evolve in their level of rigor and alignment to standards. As a result, the planning and delivery of rigorous, college ready curriculum and tasks is inconsistent and the subsequent differentiation for the diversity of learners is uneven across the school, hindering the school's capacity to meet the needs of all of its students.

- Strengthen teacher pedagogy across the school to reflect the school's set of shared beliefs about how students learn best so that instruction is cognitively engaging and meets the needs of all learners. (1.2)
 - o The school believes that when students are thinking, interacting with peers, and held accountable with clear expectations, and their responsibilities articulated, they learn and are successful. Teachers are working on lifting the level of student participation and engagement in their classrooms. In many classrooms, students participate by responding to teacher directed questions and activities. In one class, student-reading partnerships led to students supporting each other in understanding the text and surfacing evidence to support their position. Teachers stated that increasing student voice in their lessons is a focal goal of the school and is a clear element in their lesson plans. While increasing student voice is a focus school wide, and teachers are clearly working on curriculum and lessons that delineate student talk activities and opportunities for peers to interact and share their thinking, established routines and processes for students to engage authentically with peers in meaningful, content-focused, and structured ways is uneven across the school. Therefore, the specific needs of the diversity of learners are inconsistently addressed in these activities across the school. As a result, the delivery of student-centered and cognitively engaging lessons that reflect the schools set of shared beliefs about how students learn best is inconsistent and lessons are not differentiated for all learners in all content areas, limiting the school's capacity to fully address specific needs, engage, and challenge all students.

- Expand the work of teachers and teams so that assessment practices align to key standards and analysis of that work leads to addressing all learners needs. (2.2)
 - o Teachers and teams follow a systematic approach to delivering instruction and assessing student written work. The school is in the process of developing college ready curriculum and culminating tasks that address key standards. During the course of lesson delivery, some teachers check for student understanding through questioning, peer work, and written work. In some

- classes, students assess their work. While the school clearly has structures in place for teachers to assess student learning on culminating tasks, not all tasks and assessment rubrics are fully correlated to key college ready standards and curriculum. Additionally, while some teachers check for student understanding and have routines for engaging students in self-assessment and reflection on their learning, these practices are not uniform across the school. As a result, teachers across the school do not consistently address the strengths and areas of need for all learners through the process of formative and summative assessment, make adjustments during lessons to meet diverse learning needs, and provide differentiated feedback to support students moving to the next level.
- Deepen the practice of frequent classroom observation and analysis of learning outcomes so that feedback and support provides clear expectations and accountability for teacher practice across the school. (4.1)
 - o Teachers receive support from administration relative to how they can move their practice forward through oral and written feedback following classroom observations. At the beginning of the year, the administration selected components from the framework for each teacher to work on based on growth areas identified during initial classroom visits. This process later shifted to give teachers the opportunity to self-assess and select another component from the framework on which they wanted to focus, leading to teachers feeling empowered about their professional growth process. In addition to feedback from supervisors, team members visit each other's classrooms as a part of their inquiry cycle work, provide each other with feedback, and further discuss teaching practice in the light of the framework. The principal visits teams at the end of each cycle providing feedback and support to deepen the practices in place and extend the team's thinking about pedagogy and student work. While the school has developed systems for observation, use of a research-based rubric, and peer observation as an aspect of collaborative inquiry aimed at improving practice, these processes have not produced consistent and sustained shifts in the pedagogy observed across classrooms so that it is connected and aligned to stated school goals, teacher selected components, and administrator feedback.
 - Strengthen the systems and structures to evaluate the work of teacher teams and outcomes of professional development so that changes in teacher practice are evident across the school. (5.4)
 - The school's administration is developing an on-going articulated and systematic approach to supporting, monitoring, and revising collaborative inquiry teamwork and professional development in order to clarify, refine, and revise the processes to better address the needs of teachers. Mid-year adjustments were made to the systems and structures based on collective evaluation and reflective feedback from the use of the research-based framework, the inquiry process, and school wide professional development. While systems and structures have been developed and revised around the monitoring and deepening of professional development practices at the school, the systematic use of data to drive the work of improving and tracking teacher pedagogical shifts over time has not been developed. As a result, the evaluation of the effectiveness of teacher development practices including classroom observation and feedback as well as specific professional development training has not been articulated in such a way to show teacher growth and pedagogical shifts that are evident and sustained in classroom practice across the school.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Harlem Renaissance 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 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		
1..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
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