

# **Quality Review Report 2012-2013**

**Harvey Milk High School**

**High School M586**

**2-10 ASTOR PLACE  
MANHATTAN  
NY10003**

**Principal: Daphne Perrini**

**Dates of review: Mar 5-6, 2013  
Lead Reviewer: Marisol Bradbury**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Harvey Milk High School is a high school with 68 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 38% Black, 40% Hispanic, 16% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 83.6%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school makes purposeful decisions to design curricula aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to engage students in rigorous tasks. (1.1)
  - Teachers at the school have curriculum maps for each subject they teach with an emphasis on reading, writing, and speaking embedded in skills, assessment tools, and final performance tasks. During common planning times, subject area teachers meet to align and refine tasks to CCLS using the Depth of Knowledge (DOK ) levels continuum. Therefore, across subjects, all students have opportunities to access common core aligned units of study, which will prepare them to be college and career ready.
  - Teachers look at samples of student work, such as essay writing, to assess achievement as aligned to the CCLS performance task. Together, teachers discuss and debrief the task based on students' responses. In the math meeting, teachers developed the upcoming unit of study and tasks aligned to DOK in order to promote higher order tasks. In the social studies team, teachers defined a task from a previous lesson and discussed ways to improve the task based on the assessment of student work and the level of rigor according to DOK. This practice of refining tasks aligned to CCLS promotes high level tasks and lessons, so that all students, including students with disabilities (SWDs) and English language learners (ELLs) have access to rigorous CCLS tasks across the curricula and are cognitively engaged.
- Principal's strategic hiring, scheduling, and intervention decisions support the school's instructional goals and meet students' needs in order to close the achievement gap. (1.3)
  - The principal has created structures for teachers to meet daily within their subject area teams, as well as for the entire staff to meet together to conduct case studies of students who struggle socially, emotionally, and academically. Teachers have common planning periods every day to meet within their departments to map curriculum and refine tasks according to student need and alignment to CCLS. Every Wednesday, the entire school instructional community meets from 12 to 3 PM to engage in various forms of inquiry based work. While some groups of teachers analyze lesson studies through a protocol, other teachers analyze student work from tasks embedded into common core aligned units. As a result, teachers are elevating the rigor of their lessons by aligning tasks to the CCLS and implementing strategies that support the learning needs of all students in their classes. Consequently, students are exposed to challenging tasks across subjects.
  - The principal made decisions to eliminate administrative support and redistribute responsibilities so that licensed teachers could be hired who shared a common instructional philosophy and a deep affinity for students who are over aged, and under credited. She also eliminated courses that did not demonstrate student improvement. These new hires have joined the efforts of returning teachers to provide students with the supports needed to graduate from high school through the provision of a small class ratio across all subject areas, and a personalized academic plan. Teachers are responsible for all students in the small classes and follow up with students regularly regarding academics, attendance, and college readiness. Consequently, teachers know their students well and plan lessons according to their social, emotional, and academic needs.

- Students, parents, and staff appreciate the school's focused efforts on maintaining a supportive, inclusive, and respectful environment that strengthens the development of students' academic, social, and emotional growth. (1.4)
  - The school strong shared belief on student success is one in which administrators, teachers, and staff must know students' backgrounds, interests, and developmental learning needs in order to support them academically, socially, and emotionally. Thus, teachers meet regularly with students to review their academic achievement and discuss areas of progress and difficulty. The principal's conscious effort to give every student voice includes the open invitation to student council as well as forums to express their interests, opinions, struggles, and successes. As a result many students expressed that for the first time they want to attend and do well in school because they feel respected and safe.
  - The principal holds a degree in counseling and coordinates the efforts of the full time social worker, school aides, and guidance staff from their partnering organization Hetrick Martin Institute (HM). They meet weekly to discuss students' social and emotional needs and to develop specific intervention support plans, including therapy, guidance sessions, one on one and group sessions which are monitored by the principal, who then shares pertinent information with teachers in order to improve academic outcomes. The entire school staff meets together weekly to discuss case studies and identify strategies to be implemented in lessons such as checks for understanding, pair and share, self reflection, peer review, among others. In addition to the support that exists during the day, the partnership with HM provides an array of resources, intervention, and support to students and their families, including tutoring, mentoring, referrals to outside agencies, drama, musical, regents preparatory, and college readiness programs resulting in academic and personal growth of students.
- The school community uses data-informed processes to plan, make decisions and set goals in order to improve teacher practices and student outcomes. (3.1)
  - School leaders and teachers believe that they need to increase the rigor in their classes and practice in order to provide targeted academic support for students to reach high levels of achievement. An evaluation of the performance of students on Regents' examinations and students' levels of academic skills, coupled with the practice of teachers in relation to student needs, resulted in teachers being asked by the principal to develop specific, measurable, attainable, results focused, and time bound (SMART) goals. These goals were based on their practice as it relates to focus Danielson Framework for Teaching competencies including: designing coherent instruction (1e), questioning techniques (3b), and using assessment in instruction (3d). The principal structured various support systems aligned to the focus competencies in order to help teachers attain their goals. These supports include weekly inquiry based work to learn about student needs and identify best practice strategies, monthly learning rounds to assess teacher practice, lesson study to engage in professional conversations, and common planning time to develop CCLS tasks. Teachers lead and facilitate some of the work. The principal meets regularly with teachers to review progress and effectiveness of the assistance provided. As a result of this practice, teachers are active members of their professional development plan, thus owning their learning and effectiveness of their teaching practice.
  - The principal meets with teachers individually and as a large group to review their work and progress towards the instructional goals, including the use of assessment, questioning, and development of lessons. During teacher team meetings, teachers constantly discussed the alignment of their lessons and strategies to the goals of the school. Teachers were clear about their

expectations for students as it related to citing evidence from text, engaging in dialogue, and creating tasks that were levels three or four in the DOK continuum. In turn, students were able to articulate what was expected of them in relation to their essay writing and participation in class. Parents and students stated that the principal consults and listens before making a decision as evidenced by the recent change to have outside lunch for students after consulting with teachers, parents, and students. This approach to leadership, enables the principal to create a culture that promotes communication and ownership by all stake holders.

## What the school needs to improve

- Improve teaching strategies to provide multiple entry points for all students across subjects and grades to promote high levels of student thinking and participation. (1.2)
  - Lesson objectives are frequently aligned to the units of study and CCLS, although teaching practices do not consistently provide multiple entry points and appropriately challenge all students. Some strategies observed in classrooms include independent and paired work, non fiction reading, citing textual evidence, and examining primary sources to determine cause. These practices, however, are not consistent across the subjects. In some classrooms, teachers breakdown the content by sharing most of the knowledge aloud with students, and elicit low level questions to assess students' understanding of facts and accurate information. This practice limits students' ability to engage in dialogue, struggle with challenging tasks, and share their conceptual understanding, consequently preventing students from demonstrating higher order thinking skills in their work.
  - Teachers spend a great deal of time refining tasks that elicit higher level activities according to DOK, although the work students generate varies from classroom to classroom. In a Social Studies class students were asked to determine cause based on the analysis of primary sources as related to the book they read. In an English language arts (ELA) class, students were asked to identify political, social, and cultural aspects of specific time periods via research. A science class, had students explain the feedback mechanism based on evidence from a current newspaper article. The work generated from these students involved the analysis, application, and synthesis of information as well as reading, writing, and discussion amongst peers; however this type of high level work was inconsistent across all subject areas, preventing students' equal access to levels of thinking and participation to prepare them to for success in college.
- Strengthen the use of ongoing checks for understanding and assessment practices in order to consistently make effective adjustments in response to student learning needs. (2.2)
  - Across departments, teachers share a common grading policy. Across classrooms, individual teachers create and use their own assessments and rubrics. Most lesson plans include an assessment component, which is used as a guide for the teacher to elicit student understanding of the particular topic and objective for the lesson. In one mathematics class, the teacher developed a rubric that assessed the skills related to the demonstration of problem solving, reasoning, proof, communication, connections, and representation. This rubric accompanied an end of unit project and provided the teacher with an opportunity to give actionable feedback to students as well as information to refine the unit and project for future courses. However, this was not a consistent practice across subjects and grades, thus limiting the opportunity to provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding academic achievement.

- Teachers' assessment practices included quizzes, tests, and end of unit projects. As a form of checking for understanding, teachers use their own observation of student work and pose questions. There was some evidence of teachers collecting exit slips and student self reflection, but there was little evidence that this practice is used to make effective adjustments to meet the learning needs of all students, including ELL's and SWD's. This prevents students' awareness of their next learning steps in order to improve academically as well as teachers' use of this data to create multiple entry points for all students in the class.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Harvey Milk High School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?		X					
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?		X					
<b>School Culture</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?			X				
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			X				
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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				
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed