

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**The Heritage School**

**04M680**

**1680 Lexington Avenue  
Manhattan, NY  
10029**

**Principal: Dyanand Sugrim**

**Dates of review: May 1-2, 2013  
Lead Reviewer: Anthony R. Lodico**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Heritage School is a high school with 294 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 29.0% Black, 69.0% Hispanic, 1.0% White, and 0.0% Asian students. The student body includes 7.0% English language learners and 25.0% special education students. Boys account for 49.0% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51.0%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 85.3%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has aligned curricula with state standards and has integrated Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) tasks that promote college and career readiness for the diversity of learners. (1.1)
  - School leaders and teachers have aligned curricula to the CCLS. School teams have developed units of study in all core subjects and teacher teams are using Tri-State Assessment results to evaluate the effectiveness of units. Academic tasks and student work products have been aligned with the school's goals and the Chancellor's instructional expectations. In English language arts, teachers focus on the reading of non-fiction and writing ensuring student proficiency in formulating claims/counterclaims and citing of evidence. In math, teachers expect students to reflect on their process when solving problems and to be able to express that process in writing and orally. Another example seen during classroom visits aligned with the CIE shifts was the expectation of students to self-assess and create higher order questions to use as peer to peer interaction and extend their thinking. In addition, Teachers share that the support and professional development from Teachers' College and the work in teacher teams have allowed them to analyze student work and other data in planning tasks, resulting in more opportunities for all learners to be cognitively engaged and college and career ready.
- School leaders make strategic organizational decisions to utilize budget, time and resources that are aligned with school goals and maximize student and adult learning. (1.3)
  - The principal strategically aligns resources and organizational decisions to the school's overarching goals and key priorities. Smartboards are in every classroom and the school has recently purchased forty additional laptops to support student learning. Administrators have programmed additional instructional time for ninth grade English and math classes to ensure supports that build the foundation for student success and promotion to 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Also, the school's partnership with Teachers' College and a commitment to teacher meetings, common planning and the introduction of Skedula and PupilPath have all contributed to the shared goal of increased communication and collaboration, leading to improved student work, as evidenced by examination of work on bulletin boards and in reviewing student work products.
  - The principal pays careful attention to teacher hiring and assignments, to insure student needs are met. With about 25% of the students with individualized education plans (IEP), school leaders interview prospective teachers whom they expect to share a philosophy of supporting all students and meeting all student needs. Candidates are expected to be flexible, collaborative, open to feedback and most importantly, committed to engaging all students, thus creating a foundation for college and career readiness. Teacher team meetings are designed to be collaborative and are supporting the pedagogical shifts needed to increase achievement for all learners. This level of commitment to the success of all students is evidenced in the significant increase in the number of students with disabilities and English language learners on-track students in the 2013 cohort. Seven out of eleven IEP students and all ELL students are on track to graduate.

- Students and families benefit from the school's commitment to a safe, nurturing and collaborative learning environment that effectively supports students' academic and social emotional growth. (1.4)
  - The principal makes it a priority to maintain a positive environment that is supportive of students and their families. He has reorganized and reallocated resources to ensure that both deans and guidance personnel support student needs and are able to work closely with the administration to maintain a safe, positive culture. The principal leads by example and is visible and in classrooms regularly. In addition to student leaders having the ability to communicate regularly with the principal, there is an open door policy which allows all students to have access to the school leader. Parents proudly state that the principal, teachers, parent coordinator and staff know their children very well and that effective communication is key to their children's success. Along with active and involved school staff members who are invested in student success, there are partnerships and initiatives that are designed to bolster college and career readiness and to improve student attendance. Partnerships such as Counseling in Schools, Teachers' College, Hunter College and Hostos College Now Programs and the newly instituted National Honor Society Chapter, have all contributed to gains in student achievement and the availability of more advanced and challenging courses for students. One successful initiative that has been instituted in conjunction with Counseling in Schools is the peer tutoring program. In the spring of 2013 there were seven peer tutors who tutored about 25 students identified by teachers. Eleventh and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students shared that they are working harder than they ever have and that the majority of teachers "push" them to their limits and expect them to succeed. As a result, all students benefit from a variety of support structures that meet their academic and social emotional needs.
  
- Using a research based teaching framework, administrators use the classroom observation process to generate feedback that has resulted in improvement of teacher practice and student outcomes. (4.1)
  - School leaders are explicit in their expectations for pedagogic practice. There is an expectation that teachers employ the workshop model of instruction and that students are provided with the opportunity to be deeply engaged in challenging tasks that allow them to demonstrate higher order thinking. All teachers are expected to achieve this by using Webb's Depths of knowledge higher order questioning strategies when planning lessons, to ensure that levels 3 and 4 questions are being employed. Administrators assess teachers, using a research based teaching framework, and hold teachers accountable for high quality instruction, through ongoing classroom visits. With frequent cycles of observation, school leaders measure teachers' progress toward pedagogic goals and teachers receive effective feedback that outlines next steps for improving their instructional practice. School leaders continually analyze data and student work from observation cycles to understand teacher skill and impact on student outcomes. They align professional development plans for the school and for individual and groups of teachers to student performance data, resulting in targeted professional development activities to improve teacher practice. For example, administrators designed professional

development opportunities for math teachers, based on the school's designation as a priority school due to low scores on New York State math exams. The principal also added a math coach to assure the appropriate levels of support for math instruction. The culture of the school is one of professional learning, where teachers articulate feeling extremely supported by administration and have full recognition of how their practice influences student learning. Consequently, as evidenced in classroom visits and observation reports, there is growing competency among teachers, in using high level questions and engagement of students in meaningful discussions.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Build upon pedagogical strategies to further increase active student engagement, higher order thinking and rigorous work products. (1.2)
  - Some teachers are making a successful transition to the kind of pedagogy necessary to meet the demands of the common core, but in a number of classrooms, improvement in instruction has not kept pace with increased curricular expectations. In some classrooms, there is meaningful intellectual discourse and tasks that are designed to be highly engaging. For example, in several classes teachers asked students open ended questions, and expected them to interact and engage in discussion with classmates and cite evidence from texts. Whether it was a guided reading activity prompting inferences made by students about a novel being read, an in-depth character study to be presented orally or preparing a tutorial for redox reactions in chemistry, in some classes students participated in intellectual discourse that was highly engaging. However, these kinds of practices are not pervasive across all subject areas. Several teachers still rely heavily on a lecture-oriented approach, with students taking notes and engaging in little higher order thinking. As a result, students are not engaged vibrantly in all subjects, and throughout the school, certain practices have not yet become the norm.
- Expand the practice of analyzing data from formative and summative assessments to insure feedback that informs instructional decisions and reflects students' learning needs. (2.2)
  - Teacher teams have begun to reflect on student work and analyze the results of both summative and formative assessments. For example, teacher teams and individual teachers are looking at item analyses of Regents and mock Regents exams, marking period exams, quizzes, end of unit tests and exit slips with the goal of improving student achievement. However, the current systems in place do not yet provide teachers and students with feedback that successfully informs student self-assessment or drive consistent and effective adjustments to classroom instruction, in alignment with students' needs. This hinders students understanding of next steps for improving their performance and limits teachers' ability to accelerate learning for all students and to more prescriptively focus instruction on skill based interventions that would deepen support for students' individual learning needs.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: The Heritage School	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>				
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?			<b>X</b>				
<b>School Culture</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>				
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an <b>inquiry approach</b> that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>