

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**Leadership Institute High School**

**X276**

**1701 Fulton Avenue**

**Bronx**

**NY 10457**

**Principal: Marta Colon**

**Dates of review: May 21-22, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Victoria Armas**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Leadership Institute High School is a high school with 230 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 33% Black, 64% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 78.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school's curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) with a focus on key standards in order to provide rigorous and relevant academic experiences that support diverse learners. (1.1)
  - Each content-area curriculum, which articulates CCLS standards, texts to be utilized, assessments, and adaptations for sub-groups, is delineated on a school-wide uniform template collaboratively designed by teachers. Key standards have been selected to align with Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) including citing evidence from text in writing and discussions for English language arts (ELA), and application and fluency in math. In addition, curriculum maps include an inter-disciplinary approach by focusing on literacy, as well as making other connections as suitable to units of study across subject areas. A science unit that exemplifies higher order planning included a project on the impact of human beings on the environment. Students choose topics, conduct research, and develop a hypothesis. An action plan presentation to the class is meant to impact students' thinking as to their participation in changes that could hinder the effects humans are having on the environment. Thus students are engaged in relevant, meaningful instruction while preparing for the rigor of post-secondary learning.
  - Teachers' College coaches have supported the planning and refinement of curricula and academic tasks on an ongoing basis. Retreat days and on-site support by coaches have facilitated the reflection by teachers of practices and approaches that address student needs, with adjustments made to curriculum maps and lesson plans according to the findings. Furthermore, the school utilizes Depth of Knowledge (DOK) to develop questions, as well as the learning intention of lessons. In addition, teacher teams meet daily during dedicated common planning periods to engage in lesson study and the review of student work using protocols in order to modify lesson plans and teaching strategies, as well as collaboratively adapt instructional approaches with a focus on the needs of English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs). As a result, gains in credit accumulation across all subject areas were noted since last year, with math improvement exceeding 30% in credits earned.
- An environment that is safe and respectful has been established at the school that is conducive to personal and academic growth for students. (1.4)
  - A community-based organization (CBO) called the Leadership Program, Incorporated, partners with teachers to provide afterschool clubs for students that align activities and projects to the school's curriculum, while taking into consideration student learning styles. The Storytellers, a literacy based club, infuses the creation of original poetry with performance, the Expressionists promote math skills through traditional theatrical and dance practices, and the Checkmates, is a math and logic games challenge club. The school won a national award for character education through the activities of the Leadership Program, Incorporated.

In addition, the school's student government hosted a spirit week and intramural staff and student athletic games, in which most students participate, promoting a respect for student voice and an inclusive culture.

- The small student population at the school allows the faculty and administrators to know every student by name. An open door policy is promoted across the school in order to encourage trust and facilitate the resolution of concerns. Furthermore, the guidance counselor and school psychologist address student issues as they arise. Conferences with each student by the guidance counselor are conducted in the fall and spring to discuss progress toward graduation in terms of credit accumulation. In addition, community based organizations provide students with support that align to their needs. These include the Sistas & Brothas United, Incorporated. that provide tutoring and leadership development; Phipps, Incorporated provides guidance and employment opportunities; and the Gang Diversion, Reentry And Absent Fathers Intervention Centers, Inc. (GRAAFICS) program targets young men who have been incarcerated. These supports have resulted in a decrease in incidents as reported in Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS), as well as a slight improvement in attendance.
- The school purposefully utilizes a wide range of data and assessments in order to identify student needs and adjust instruction to improve outcomes. (2.2)
  - The school uses a variety of data streams including: teacher created assessments, periodic and interim assessments, Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS) data, Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) documents, New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), Regents results and item analysis, grade 8 New York State (NYS) ELA and math results, as well as teacher observation information to plan instruction, develop curriculum, and support improvements to teaching practice. Moreover, teachers create common assessments for units of study, as well as pre- and post-assessments, and exit slips that are aligned to key standards and curricula. In addition, a school-wide grading policy, collaboratively developed by teachers, is in effect. Furthermore, progress reports are provided 12 times, in addition to the distribution of six report cards throughout the entire school year, resulting in frequent, actionable feedback to students and families regarding achievement, as well as meaningful information for teachers that supports instructional decisions.
  - Student portfolios were evident in all classrooms that included a template with student goals for the course, teacher comments and feedback on student work, the use of rubrics, and student self-assessments and reflections on individual pieces. In addition, teachers utilize exit slips in order to plan lessons for the following day. This was evidenced in a United States history class' lesson on Theodore Roosevelt's "Big stick" policy. An exit slip chart was posted and students indicated their understanding of the lesson by responding on a post-it to a multiple-choice question projected on the SMART board. This post-it, with the student's name on the back, included a rationale for the response was placed on the chart. This provided the teacher with immediate feedback of each student understanding of the concept, as well as giving feedback to students as the correct answer was discussed, thus promoting

reflective assessment practices leading to instructional adjustments to meet learning needs.

- School leaders and teachers effectively engage in frequent classroom observation and the analysis of student work to provide accurate and transparent feedback that elevates instructional practices. (4.1)
  - The school is part of the Teacher Effectiveness pilot (TEP) that requires frequent formal and informal observations with focused feedback using the Danielson Framework for Teaching (FfT). Additionally teachers self-assess their instructional practice according to the FfT competencies and set professional goals that are re-visited during mid-year conversations and feedback sessions after classroom observations. All observation information is uploaded to the ARIS system, where teachers and school leaders are able to access information, resulting in a transparent process. Furthermore, new teachers stated that they receive lots of support from the school including a mentor, support from coaches, peers, teacher teams, and school leaders in order to further their practice. This work has resulted in improvement in the effective rating of the focus competency 3b, using questioning and discussion techniques, by more than 25% since the beginning of the school year.
  - Teachers develop action plans in collaboration with school leaders based on student achievement data and feedback from observation evidence collected during classroom visits. Action plans delineate supports to teachers which include viewing videos in ARIS, participation in lesson study during common planning sessions, conducting inter-visitations to classrooms using a protocol, observing modeled lessons, support from Teachers' College coaches, conferencing with school leaders and teacher peers, and attendance to professional development and workshops. Follow-up cycles of observations by school leaders document teacher progress toward goals leading to improved teacher practice and professional growth.

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

- Enhance teacher capacity to provide strategic supports and extensions that lead to high levels of student thinking and participation, resulting in consistently rigorous work products. (1.2)
  - The school utilizes a point of entry model for the delivery of instruction, which includes a “do now” activity followed by modeling, group, or independent practice, and a summary, all of which promotes engagement. Lessons include modifications for sub-group populations that include scaffolds and questioning that provide access to learning. During a Living Environment class, students were grouped according to ability levels with supports that included the use of graphic organizers and small group discussions to solidify concept understanding incorporated into the lesson. Although supports for groups of students were evident during lessons, specificity in differentiated approaches and extensions to learning for higher achievers in order to actively engage all students at their suitable level are not always strategically implemented, thus hindering higher levels of achievement.

- Across classrooms visited and during conversations with students, high levels of work were evident that are relevant and make connections to students' lives. Students shared work they were proud of that included an essay on self-hatred and self-denial based on a reading of *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison. When asked about this work the student stated that she was able to hone her writing skills through the revision of multiple drafts, and "learned that in order for people to accept you, you have to accept yourself". Another student shared an essay that compared the speeches of Martin Luther King and Bill Clinton and stated that he learned the components of comparative essay, and how to express his opinion in writing. Although student work products reflect high levels of thinking, students in classrooms were not always able to provide a rationale for the learning intention or how the learning might connect or be applied to another context, thus limiting their ability to take ownership of the learning and personal responsibility for academic growth.
- Build on existing expectations for academic growth in order to strengthen school-based supports and partnerships with families to ensure students' preparedness for, and success in post-secondary pursuits. (3.4)
  - The school's goal to improve parent involvement in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) through workshops for families has included monthly offerings by the parent coordinator and invitations to school-wide events. Workshop topics for families and staff have included how to access and understand student data through ARIS, math Regents and the use of SMART boards and calculators, graduation requirements, the college application and financial aid, nutrition, motivation, empowerment, communication, managing conflict and anger, responding to challenging behaviors, and bullying. Furthermore, an ELL Gala night to showcase student work in all subject areas invited families to utilize a rubric to score presentations. In addition, faculty and staff share responsibility for students' well being and promote an understanding of student progress toward expectations through feedback and the distribution of progress reports and report cards. Although multiple and varied efforts to engage parents in school activities have been implemented, improvement in parent involvement remains slight, which hinders successful partnerships with families to support students' preparation for the next level.
  - Teacher teams and school leaders who discuss student outcomes during weekly staff meetings and common planning sessions, made the decision to create another ninth grade section in order to reduce class size and reiterate expectations. Additionally, the guidance counselor conferences with each student to discuss progress toward credit accumulation and graduation. Furthermore, teachers are available for students to support content area struggles during morning extended day, lunchtime, as well as after school in order to promote improved outcomes. Moreover, students stated that work can be re-submitted with revisions based on teacher feedback so that grades are improved. Although ongoing feedback and some supports are offered to students, strategies to provide specific and targeted guidance and advisement for individuals and groups of students who are struggling were not sufficiently evident in order to ensure that all learners are able to graduate within four years.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Leadership Institute	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 <b>inquiry approach</b> 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