

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**Herbert H. Lehman**

**X405**

**3000 East Tremont Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10461**

**Principal: Rose LoBianco**

**Dates of review: May 22, 2013  
Lead Reviewer: Leslie Miller Chislett**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Herbert H. Lehman is a high school with 2,703 students from grade 9 through 12. The school population comprises 23% Black, 60% Hispanic, 9% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 62% of the students enrolled and girls account for 38%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 77.3%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal makes tactical organizational decisions to align resources, staff assignments and professional collaboration to effectively support school goals ensuring academy-based programming tailored to students' academic and personal needs. (1.3)
  - Through the reorganization of teachers, support staff and administrators into seven small learning communities, roles of staff were redefined to align with the school's critical goal of increasing student attendance and progress towards graduation. Each semi-autonomous academy now has its own director, lead teacher, guidance counselor, dean, secretary, security and attendance aides, special education case manager and family worker; the Senior Academy has a college counselor. To increase accountability and support, the principal designed central office leadership roles to oversee school-wide operations, curriculum development and instruction, student services, attendance and assessment data, and parent outreach. Examples are the Offices of School Support, Climate and Culture, and Attendance, Assessment and Accountability. Budget, technology and space were allocated to create a teacher center to provide a setting for professional collaboration across academies and a center to foster parent involvement; both meeting places are actively used. The principal made common planning time for teachers within and across academies non-negotiable when designing the schedule to ensure substantial regular meeting time to develop more rigorous curriculum and identify strategies to support struggling students. Staff assignments to in-school tutoring were strengthened and PM and Saturday school offerings extended to guarantee student access to targeted academic support. Partnerships continue to be leveraged with the Child First Network, AUSSIES and NYC Writing Project for professional development; Brienza Academic Advantage for tutoring; Partnership with Children and Montefiore for on-site counseling for at-risk students and health care; and with Princeton Center for Learning for peer group learning. This strategic alignment of resources has aligned the community's focus, structures and procedures for communication and collaboration to better support all students' instructional and personal needs. Consequently, scholarship data shows an increase for the incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade cohort of students, as compared to the previous year of 47.1% (which was Progress Report data of August 2012) to 53% (January data now accruing the necessary 5 credits per semester).
  - Hiring practices and teacher assignments, student program groupings and interventions are deliberate to cultivate collaboration among faculty, shared accountability for students' progress and attaining instructional goals. For example, a new assistant principal for student services was hired to improve guidance, special education and English language learners services, while, at the same time, special education teachers were realigned with academies to improve case management. Working together, special education teachers and their academy colleagues conducted annual and tri-annual reviews of students with disabilities' individualized education plans resulting in 400 out-of-compliance cases to be closed and 17% of these students moving to learning environments less restrictive when compared to their previous settings. To support the academic and personal needs of all students, weekly common planning time was devoted to "kid talk" or case conferencing and intervention planning. The Academic Policy Committee was created for supervision of all credit bearing alternatives to ensure compliance graduation requirements. In addition, to target needs of overage, under-credited students, the principal created the Satellite Excel Academy where a small group of students are programmed to start school earlier and end later in the day and are given proximity to the main office. Qualified teachers from all academies are also scheduled to teach in the Satellite academy where programming is

tailored to student social, emotional and academic issues. As the principal explains, this has produced numerous cases where students that were formerly severely at-risk for failure are now attending school and making progress towards graduation.

- The school's culture and structures guarantee a safe environment where students and adults are supported through professional development, community outreach and learning experiences that foster social and emotional growth. (1.4)
  - Central office teams collaborate with one another and each academy to systematically ensure students are safe and individually known by adults through attendance support, disciplinary actions, guidance and youth development services that are responsive to student needs. Related structures and processes include on-going electronic communication between the principal, academy directors and deans, security aids student support staff and teachers; regular academy-based attendance meetings bringing together counselors, deans, attendance coordinators and teachers from each small community to implement strategies such as home visits; guidance staff to provide programming advisement, mandated counseling and behavioral intervention planning; and a team of college advisors to assist juniors and seniors with college and career exploration, applications and financial aid. In addition, the Intervention Team (I-Team), comprised of social workers, offers services for 200 at-risk students along with an after-school reading club and girls and boys' empowerment group that supports student transition back to school after long-term suspension. The school substance abuse and violence prevention specialist educates members of the community and delivers crisis intervention. A transition services coordinator guides students with disabilities to make connections with outside organizations for career planning. Partnership with Children, a community-based organization, serves 120 at-risk students on-site through intensive attendance support, crisis intervention, and case management and counseling. Among gains in progress towards graduation for each grade cohort of students, the resulting impact has been a dramatic 70% decline in suspensions since the previous year and an increase of 1 to 4 percentage points in average attendance across academies.
  - Professional development, family outreach and student learning promote the adoption of behaviors conducive to college and career readiness. In partnership with Princeton Center for Leadership Training, the school has adopted a program called Peer Group Connection (PGC) to support students' successful transition from middle to high school. The program taps into the potential of outstanding high school juniors and seniors to create a nurturing environment for incoming freshmen and assist them with and developing resiliency among other attributes. Once per week throughout the year pairs of junior and senior peer leaders meet with groups of 10-14 freshmen in advisory sessions focused on relevant issues designed to strengthen relationships among students across grades. The upper classmen peer leaders are simultaneously enrolled in a daily, for-credit, year-long leadership course taught by school faculty to assist them in understanding the goals, strategies and lessons that are part of the PGC curriculum. Students, parents and faculty members have observed a shift in school culture, student awareness of behaviors such as self-advocacy that contributes to academic success. In addition to PGC, curriculum and training are developed and implemented in classrooms to prevent bullying, promote service, foster peer mediation and conflict resolution. Parent learning opportunities overseen by the assistant principal of student support services, parent coordinator and Parent Association extend the focus on personal growth. Program evaluation data that include student surveys illuminate the positive impact of this program on student social and emotional development.
- Teachers engage in inquiry-based professional collaboration that promotes the school's instructional goals, integration of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), refinement of pedagogy and shared leadership resulting in adult and student learning. (4.2)

- Academy-based inquiry teams meet at least once weekly to review the work of a target population of students for whom they are concerned, locate patterns in data, and decide on actions to take to adjust classroom instruction. In addition, department teams meet regularly with lead content-area teachers and collaboratively use protocols to examine student performance on tasks aligned to the CCLS instructional shifts. Leadership reports teamwork has improved teacher capacity to effectively design lesson plans and utilize pedagogy such as discussion and writing structures that assist students in supporting claims and counter-claims with evidence details in arguments. Consequently, teachers explain that pre-assessment, formative and post assessment summaries show students making progress towards the new standards for literacy and math. Also, Achieve 3000 data and Ed Performance data show English language learners, students with disabilities and participating 9<sup>th</sup> grade students improving in Lexile reading levels.
- Distributed leadership structures are in place to give teachers a voice in decisions affecting student learning. Teachers that lead academy inquiry teams meet weekly as a facilitators' team to learn strategies, share trends across teams and to align their team's work with school goals for instructional improvement, for example, planning coherent instruction, which are based on the Danielson teaching framework. Lead content area teachers also meet regularly with the assistant principal of curriculum and instruction to voice needs that influence professional development planning. The outcome of these opportunities for shared leadership is staff buy-in to the school-wide instructional focus on the CCLS and Danielson framework as evidenced by a common language and approach to planning, teacher self-initiated collaboration beyond the pre-determined meetings and professional growth observed during formal and informal observations. Student work reveals learners gaining CCLS literacy skills across disciplines.
- Teachers use common assessments, rubrics and grading policies across grades and subjects to determine student progress toward key standards and identify learning gaps producing actionable feedback used to adjust instruction and advance student progress. (2.2)
  - The school adapted common performance assessments tasks and rubrics for each subject aligned to key State and Common Core standards in literacy and math. As they did this, they viewed it as necessary for the accreditation committee to formulate a uniform grading policy across the academies requiring teachers to make more use of formative assessment information in a student's final grade rather than solely end-of-unit or semester tests. In addition to standards-aligned rubrics to evaluate progress and next steps, assessment results are communicated through an online grading system, Pupil Path, to promote shared understanding of feedback between teachers, students and parents. Students report that rubrics, goal setting and reflection are a common part of their classes that helps them know where to improve. Individual teachers and teams use this information to adjust instruction. For example, English language arts teachers recognized after writing task analyses that students needed more support in structuring a controlling idea and providing supporting details. Graphic organizers were introduced. Math teachers analyzed multiple choice items on practice Regents exams to find that students needed support in explaining answers and checking work to overcome the tendency to skip items. Therefore, assessment feedback drives tailoring of instruction producing advancement of student learning.
  - Academy and department directors work with teachers to set goals for entire grade cohorts, individual classes and subgroups of students. Common assessment information, such as pre- or end-of-unit tests and passing rates, is analyzed to determine progress towards goals. Under the supervision of the assistant principal of instruction and curriculum, lead teachers and teachers from each department examine what is working and what is not in and then use assessment data to adjust pacing guides, curriculum maps and daily instructional plans. For example, the lead science teacher shared that students often

struggle with certain Regents exam topics and that the impact of use of standards-aligned report or argument writing has improved content knowledge on these topics. Moreover, the math department has learned the need to provide students with more open-ended, group-oriented problem solving situations. As a result, the use of common assessments has produced progress towards adult and student learning goals.

## What the school needs to improve

- Improve the planning and implementation of coherent, CCLS-aligned units of study with embedded performance tasks and complex texts that emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills for a diversity of learners. (1.1)
  - The school has developed curriculum maps to show what CCLSs will be addressed during units of instruction in math, English language arts and literacy in the content areas, and has adopted performance tasks in various disciplines. School leaders and teachers explain purposeful emphasis on literacy and math shifts such as reading and writing non-fiction text, using evidence from text in argument writing, academic vocabulary or open-ended problem solving in math to deepen conceptual understanding. Currently, most unit outlines provide a general description of end-of-unit assessments aligned to these CCLS priority topics and skills. However, identification of multiple complex texts for higher-level analysis in keeping with the Standards is not yet evident. Also, instructional sequences and pre-determined scaffolds that anticipate the needs of diverse or struggling learners are not frequently evident in curricula plans. For example, English language arts, science and social studies unit plans show the final product to be a five paragraph essay where students argue their side, few texts are identified and supports and extensions for English language learners, students with disabilities or high end learners are not included. As a consequence of frequent absence of planning to engage all students on a higher level in ways commensurate with their needs, curricula lack the potential to close the achievement gap.
- Strengthen teaching practices across subjects and grades including questioning and scaffolds to consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula so that all students demonstrate high levels of thinking and participation. (1.2)
  - Through professional development lesson plan study and learning walks on the Danielson framework and CCLS instructional shifts, shared agreements about planning coherent instruction and research-based strategies are emerging among faculty. Through a common lesson plan structure, teachers consider what students need to do that is aligned with teaching objectives, how to model for the whole class, then foster group and independent work that is informed by data on learner needs, and promote depth of knowledge. However, while practices like discussion of higher level questions to engage and advance students through rigorous content are targeted in planning, their use was inconsistently evident in classrooms. Most teachers displayed an objective or essential question for their lesson, but the activity in numerous classrooms did not fit the goal. In-depth discussion of essential questions was fostered in only a few of the classrooms. Instead, questioning typically volleyed between the teacher and called-upon students and, sometimes, teachers answered instead of allowing other students to share and participate in discussion. Learning tasks appeared influenced by the CCLS at times when students were encouraged to take a position, but text- dependent answers were not always required in these situations. Most teachers had students work in groups on the same activity and did not articulate a strong rationale for how students were grouped. In most classrooms observed, teachers explained that they heterogeneously mixed students to help one another. Scaffolds or varied approaches to learning tasks were not normally offered except for graphic organizers and some opportunities for choice. As pedagogy is not yet fully

consistent with the framework for effective practice and instructional shifts of the CCLS, student participation and cognitive engagement are not reliably high across classes, thus limiting student academic growth and progress towards graduation.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Herbert H. Lehman	UD	D	P	WD
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			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>				

<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>
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