



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Quality Review
Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning
2013-2014**

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Harlem Renaissance High School

High School 285

**22 East 128th Street
Manhattan
NY 10035**

Principal: Nadav Zeimer

**Dates of review: May 14 - 15, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Nicky Kram Rosen**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Harlem Renaissance High School is a high school with 229 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 56% Black, 42% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 43% of the students enrolled and girls account for 57%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 68%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School wide instructional practices are coherent and reflect a common belief to support all learners, thus resulting in greater student participation and ownership. (1.2)
 - Across a vast majority of classrooms, instruction is driven by the shared belief that students learn best by organizing for effort, having clear expectations in order to master core concepts, and using knowledge actively. Moreover, in the vast majority of classrooms, students were able to articulate the purpose behind each lesson, unit and the intended learning outcomes. For example, visits to Culture and Business (CB) unit courses revealed how students are applying skills learned in science and math to collect and analyze relevant school-wide recycling data and critique one another's research including the impact of their work which has improved student outcomes in core academic classes. A visit to an English language arts class showed students formulating hypotheses around themes embedded in various visual images to make connections and express personal, social, and cultural insights. Similarly, in a U.S. History class, a student debate demonstrated how students make valid claims with supporting evidence either from their text or other sources. Lastly, across the vast majority of the classes, students were introduced to new, complex concepts and skills, developed their own learning strategies and referred to multiple "texts" in order to answer an overarching question and solve problems resulting in increased ownership within summative student products. As a result of the above coherence and consistency in the shift of instructional practices and unified beliefs on how students learn best, informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, student engagement demonstrates levels of high order thinking as evidenced in classroom visits.
- Administrators and teachers strategically use a variety of measures of student learning data and common assessments to adjust instruction and ensure increased academic achievement. (2.2)
 - All staff members review student work against agreed-upon and established proficiency rubrics. During the interview, students claimed that the use of common rubrics across classrooms has provided them with feedback that leads to clear next steps which has led to improved outcomes and an increase in successfully completing required coursework as evidenced by the increase in percentage of students completing the necessary credits and coursework to graduate, meet college eligibility requirements and/or enter work force. Departmental teams meet to further refine student tasks, including rubrics, and modify unit plans to ensure Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) alignment, which are accessible to all students. Weekly conversations between administrators, on-site partnership coordinators, teachers and consultants are built into the schedule in order to evaluate common

assessment data and determine the academic progress of subgroups within the school. The inclusion of formal data reviews of common assessment data has allowed the administration and staff members to clearly determine student progress towards set goals and provide additional supports needed within the classroom. For example, the minutes and agendas from a series of focus groups, which are posted via *Googledocs*, reflect how professional learning is facilitated, school-wide initiatives are piloted and all constituents come together to develop a common language and shared goals. Moreover, the school community places a high premium on transparency and all stakeholders' ownership of individual and school-wide student performance and data, which also happens through shared *Googledocs*, which subsequently has led to a vast majority of staff actively engaged in collecting, updating and maintaining student data used and referenced during collaborative inquiry and additional team meetings such as the Attendance team. Custom reports, created in collaboration with DataCation, highlight changes in student performance from week-to-week which allows all staff to acknowledge students who show improvement and address students who appear to be becoming disengaged. As a result of the multiple ways to review and use common agreed-upon student data via the school wide assessment tools, both individual and sub-group student data is easy to access and staff constantly use to address students' needs, identify gaps in instruction and inform and modify their instruction and/or school programs.

- School leaders and staff work together to strengthen teacher practice via feedback from observations, and professional collaborations resulting in improved teacher development and building capacity. (4.1)
 - Strategic systems in place prioritize the goal of quality feedback via inquiry projects completed by each teacher which drives the work of the school as well as which pedagogy is assessed. For example, as stated by school leadership, the implementation of three-week inquiry model cycles, which has been in place since 2011, provides inter-departmental teacher teams a protocol in which to plan rigorous, CCLS-aligned units of study, visit colleagues' classrooms and provide feedback using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Feedback provided to teachers relates to discussions on unit planning, delivery of instruction and student performance on final task work. Small groups of teachers plan units and lessons together which are then observed by each other as well as supervisors; peer feedback is given afterwards and then captured by the teacher team's recorder and given to the teacher to review, respond and reflect upon. In addition, as stated by staff on school teams, teacher-to-teacher and administrative feedback is given through the lens of one specific, agreed upon component of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. At the end of "week three", each teacher compiles the following: all relevant lesson and unit planning documents, corresponding unit and lesson plans, feedback from peer visits, all supervisor's observation reports along with student work samples from the unit's culminating performance-based assessment and his/her analysis of students' performance data, and submits to administration for review. .

In addition, once all of the above is each teacher receives summative feedback in writing from administration with overall next steps for the following inquiry cycle, which links back to both individual teachers' professional goals as well as the school's overall goals. Thus, as a result of a strategic focus on teacher goals and instructional practices, the "three-week" model has led to improved teacher practice and ownership of professional learning.

- Across the school, teacher teams engage in well-structured inquiry-based professional collaborations to analyze data in order to strengthen instructional capacity resulting in improved student outcomes. (4.2)
 - Teacher teams work together to support a "three week," collaborative professional development cycle which involves unit planning, working with outside staff developers and a lead teacher, participating in a "lesson study," and looking at student work. For example, all teacher teams begin by identifying gaps in student understanding from the previous unit in order to address and plan. The members of the team follow up by observing each other teach a planned lesson from the planned unit, and then provide verbal and written feedback on the observed team member's instruction. In addition, teachers analyze student work from the observed lessons during both content area and inter-departmental teacher collaborative inquiry. For example, the ELA teacher team uses a teacher-created, "Text-Based Discussion Tracker," as well as a teacher-created tracking graphic organizer when looking at students' work in order to capture targeted students' performance and their understanding of focus skills via the formative assessments for the unit. During each cycle of inquiry, teachers use their teacher-created tools to confirm student learning goals are met and to identify if individual student needs were adequately addressed. The tools, rubrics, samples of student work and class data is stored in shared binder to document identify specific teaching moves which lead to greater student mastery and trends for individual and sub-groups of students. Based upon this work, colleagues suggest revisions to improve all students' outcomes and increase engagement. The inherently collaborative nature of "three-week" inquiry model, which incorporates peer-to-peer feedback, looking at student work, analyzing students' assessment data and tracking to measure mastery of set goals for both individual and targeted groups of students, has improved teacher practice, student engagement and completion of coursework.
- School leaders have established a purposeful system for evaluating curriculum initiatives and systems for improvement, leading to strategic decision-making to effectively support student mastery of CCLS. (5.1)
 - The school community has planned ongoing conversations to drive the monitoring and revision of school structures such as the school schedule and key pedagogical practices such as implementing a new Bell Schedule, to allow collaborative teacher teams to meet daily and a related services team to meet each Monday to review school-wide student data and establish weekly action plans to support struggling students. In

addition, curricular, pedagogical and assessment practices aligned to the CCLS are monitored via a teacher inquiry team and a departmental teacher team PD/Teacher-created Material/Student Data binder to ensure every staff member's lesson includes a clear purpose, a meaningful AIM, a measureable learning objective and culminating task which students can articulate to promote meta-cognition and foster student self-assessment. Furthermore, to achieve consensus and school-wide coherence, the members of the school community follow an agreed upon action plan and hold intensive operational and instructional focus groups each year. They have established a protocol to conduct, capture and report out all the work to date which is then shared with all stakeholders, outside consultants and school support personnel via a shared *Goledocs* space. For example, both the principal and UFT Chapter Chair report that at the end of the process should the learning community propose a change regarding school-wide practice, a school-based option (SBO) vote is conducted. The school's well-established system for evaluating school-wide initiatives, has led to effective organizational decision-making, effectively supporting personnel and students' emerging needs towards improved the outcomes for all students.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen school-wide curricula to include rigorous and engaging tasks, and strategically align the instructional shifts to support college and career readiness for diverse learners. (1.1)
 - The school has integrated a "backwards" unit planning template that is used across all subject areas. A review of lesson plans reflects daily AIMS to unpack the purpose of each lesson and the daily learning objective for students. Each lesson fits within a unit of study towards a culminating task and includes opportunity for peer-to-peer discussion. For example, lesson plans reviewed included a "Do Now" at the beginning of each lesson to promote student engagement which consisted of students being presented with a focus question to access prior knowledge connected with the daily lesson's AIM and objective. Furthermore, lessons included close readings and text analysis and/or problem-based learning activity. However, written prompts and assignments embedded within the lesson plan reflected mostly "yes" or "no" questions. In addition, the practice of Tier 2 and 3 words, and use of subject specific academic vocabulary lacked prevalence across some curricula resources and learning tasks. As a result, the strategic use of embedded entry points to engage learners within all student subgroups in challenging assignments is hampered. Consequently, while the school ensures that the units of study and lesson plans in social studies and science as well as ELA include the use of primary resources and a variety of content area texts such as magazine covers, advertisements and current newspaper articles to engage students and promote high levels of thinking, the strategic integration of planned student activities and tasks to include increased Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questions to raise student levels of thinking from content knowledge to analysis across all classrooms is

limited. As a result, the goal to promote all students' facility with an assortment of complex texts, academic vocabulary and speaking, listening and language needed for college and career readiness is limited and impacts increasing student achievement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Harlem Renaissance High School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score				X			
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?			X				
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the 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			
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports 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 those expectations?				X			
Systems for Improvement							
<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 student 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 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?				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			
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed